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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Robert Nesbit

MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. ROBERT NESBIT,

MISSIONARY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

BOMBAY.

BY THE

REV. J. MURRAY MITCHELL, A.M.

MISSIONARY, BOMBAY.

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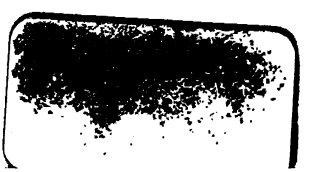

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. ROBERT NESBIT.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH — CHILDHOOD — COLLEGE LIFE — CONVERSION — ST ANDREWS AND MISSIONS.

THE multiplication of religious biographies is sometimes complained of as excessive; yet it is not without reason that a late writer in an influential periodical regards it as "a most hopeful sign of the times" that such books "invariably command a larger circulation than any other species of literature."* The beloved brother whose life and work we would seek to pourtray in the following pages was perhaps not very prominent in the public eye, either in India or at home. Yet all who knew him felt their hearts so impressed by the simplicity of his consecration to Christ and his "patient continuance in well-doing," that they not unnaturally think a memory so fragrant to themselves may well be, with the blessing of God, "a sweet savour of Christ" unto others. Simply as a Christian, ROBERT NESBIT, in his "unhasting, unresting" career, seems well to deserve remembrance; and we believe that his holy example will become yet more

* *Quarterly Review*, March 1856, p. 383.

powerfully attractive when he is seen contending, and through his Master's grace successfully contending, with the trials of missionary life. May he being dead yet speak, and especially may many be won to feel like him that "necessity is laid upon them" that they should "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ"!

Robert Nesbit was born in the village of Bowsden, in the county of Durham, on the 22d of March 1803. He was the youngest of a family of eight children. His father, Benjamin Nesbit, had a small farm on the estate of his wife's brother.

The details that have been preserved regarding his childhood would have but little interest beyond the circle of his own relatives. The following lines, written by himself many years afterwards, give a pleasing description of the love and peace that dwelt in the family circle, and shew, with perfect truthfulness, how much of that love centred on himself:—

> "I was my father's boast—the centre of
> My mother's tenderest love; and tenderly
> And fully was that love repaid. In her
> All loveliness, and all propriety,
> All beauty, and all excellence, seemed joined.
> The favourite child—the favourite brother too—
> I was the point where all might meet in peace,
> And entertain one common feeling—love.
> 'Twas thus I dwelt in love; I breathed in love;
> I fed on love; and want of love to me
> Was want of life."

His parents were of English descent, but Presbyterians; his father was an elder in a Presbyterian congregation. He was religiously brought up; and his pious mother was very careful to store his mind with simple hymns, and texts and stories from the Bible, doing so even before he could read.

Her gentle influence seems quite to have won his young heart to such lessons. "These hymns and passages," says an elder brother, "he carefully committed to memory, while he hung all day by his mother's skirts, she being busily employed in her domestic duties." Little Robert was especially fond of the hymn that says,—

> "And holy children when they die
> Go to that world above."

In repeating these words, the boy would look up in his mother's face and say, "Mother, am I a holy child? I should like to be one." Like many children he was fond of what he called "preaching." He soon shewed a strong turn for mimicry; and at the age of four could imitate the voice and manner of all the clergymen whose ministrations he had attended. The accuracy in the pronunciation of Indian languages, for which he was afterwards remarkable, may have had some connection with this talent; but so completely was it under control in after years, that probably few, even of his friends, were aware of his imitative powers.

His early years were spent near the Border,—partly in England and partly in Scotland. The natural features of some of the localities in which he lived were not devoid of beauty; and there are one or two hints in his papers that shew he was not wholly uninfluenced by the scene around—by

> "Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
> And Cheviot mountains lone."

Again, over the whole of that Border-land there cluster stirring memories of the olden time,—"every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song;" but we can trace no influence exercised by such associations over him, and in truth the element of romance was wanting in his nature. Another

class of associations would, even in early days, have affected him far more deeply,—those martyr-memories that have rendered the west and south-west of Scotland almost a holy land; but these hardly extend to the part of the country where he passed his youth.

"I do not think," writes his brother, "that Robert was quick, or what is called clever, at his lessons; if he made any great attainments, he did so by plodding perseverance." He was diligent in all his studies, and generally stood at the top of his class. His progress in Latin at the Grammar School of Berwick was so rapid, that the teacher strongly recommended that the boy should be sent to college before he was fourteen. Robert was delighted; but his wiser father seems to have given only a reluctant consent. The University selected was St Andrews. There was a competition for bursaries every year,—the competitors being examined especially on their knowledge of Latin. In the year 1816 Robert Nesbit was second on the successful list.

At St Andrews, he betook himself to study with great energy, particularly to the Latin classics under the care of a distinguished scholar, Dr John Hunter. His health failed after some months, and he was reluctantly compelled to go home before the end of the college "session" or term. He returned, however, to St Andrews the following winter, and continued till the end of the session, gaining several prizes. The next year his attention was especially given to mathematics; and again he took a prize. This fact is a proof of his exemplary diligence; for he himself has repeatedly made the remark, that he had naturally no talent or liking for mathematical study. In classics, logic, and mental philosophy, he felt himself much more at home, and gained high prizes. The following certificate from one of the professors seems worth insertion :—"Mr R. Nesbit applied him-

self to his studies with diligence and success. He discovered great clearness of apprehension, and gave many proofs of acuteness in philological discussions. In the yearly public examinations of the other classes at the end of our sessions of College, I had occasion to observe that he distinguished himself no less in the departments of science than in those of literature."

The recollections of his fellow-students would make Robert Nesbit to have been a quiet, sedate lad, with little of animal buoyancy or elasticity of spirit about him,—in fact he had but indifferent health,—no great hand at snow-balls, or the quieter amusements of the college area—very conversable withal, fond of walking with two or three companions "inside the pillars," and a great combatant in his way, ever ready for an argument, and eager to push his adversary into a corner. A friend,* who afterwards knew him well as a missionary, speaks of his possessing "a natural keenness of sarcasm, bordering at times on asperity." This keenness of sarcasm appeared occasionally, in his writings at least, for years after he had come to India; it seemed only by degrees to fade away, as his Christian character was mellowed and refined. During his college life it must have been somewhat painfully prominent; and in discussions with his academical friends, he must have been considered a formidable opponent always, and sometimes a prejudiced one.

During the next three years (1820-23), he was employed as tutor in the family of Dr Inverarity, near Arbroath. As a master, according to his own account, he was stern and inexcusably severe. Referring to this subject long afterwards in India, in a conversation he had with a member of the family, he said, "The only excuse that can be made for

* R. T. Webb, Esq.

me is, that I had not come at that time to a knowledge of the truth." The lady to whom this remark was made, observes, "No one who saw Mr Nesbit teaching the youth in the Institution could conceive how he ever could have been severe or harsh." Yet, while there can be no doubt that, in earlier life, he was blameably severe as a disciplinarian, we can hardly believe him to have been, even in those days, wanting in kind and amiable feeling. To his own relatives he was more than dutiful; he was ever affectionate as a son and brother.

In 1820 he entered St Mary's, the theological college at St Andrews, as one who aspired to the office of the holy ministry. No papers exist to shew the state of mind in which he entered on a course of such solemn responsibility; but, had they existed, they could have disclosed nothing of a satisfactory character. He was irreproachable in morals, and attentive to religious ordinances; but, as he himself explicitly stated, a few months before his death, "he knew not God" at the time his theological studies commenced. His case, we fear, is by no means singular. Both in England and Scotland there has been far too much of "bringing up for the church,"—of educating men for the sacred office, without a thought about the prior question, whether the Holy Ghost has called them to be "separate unto this ministry." None grieved over so deplorable a practice more deeply than Mr Nesbit; but he fondly hoped that, in Scotland at least, there had been of late years a great change for the better.

The following extract from a letter to his mother in 1822, nearly two years after he had entered on his divinity studies, will illustrate the state of his mind in connection with religion.

"I staid too long among you, and was too much caressed

by you, to preserve anything like evenness of mind on my return to this place. . . . . I have now, however, resumed the same tenor of mind as before, and have collected strength sufficient to defy all the attempts of mankind to make me unhappy. He, indeed, that keeps a clear conscience may advance against the evils of life with a free and fearless spirit, altogether unknown to the worthless and profane. I never saw the safety and felt the security of innocence more than on one occasion last year." He proceeds to relate how, being mistaken for another, he was falsely accused of a serious offence; and then addressing himself, he says, "Young man, ever preserve thine integrity, and thou shalt never be moved."

We fancy we hear in these words the old Roman poet again—

> Integer vitæ scelerisque purus
> Non eget Mauris jaculis nec arcu;

but certainly these are not the utterances of a mind that has been enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, and taught to know itself. The happy day, however, was not far distant when Robert Nesbit should be stripped of all his boasted "innocence," and made to tremble before the solemn realities of judgment and eternity. This momentous change took place when he was twenty years of age. Writing in 1826, he gives the following simple and affecting account of his spiritual awakening :—

"It is now upwards of three years since my mind first received a deep and practical impression of religion; and I can distinctly trace its production to the sudden death of a brother. As soon as I received intelligence of his death (for he was drowned in a storm at sea) I felt that the happiness of being able, on such an occasion, to say with assurance, "I am safe," far more than counterbalanced all the

pain of self-denial and exertion which the real practice of Christianity demands. I found, nevertheless, after a few days, that I returned to my darling sins. Reading Jeremy Taylor's book on Holy Living at the time, these sins were exposed to my view in all their heinousness and danger. My conscience was full of light; and I saw that I must either abandon my sins or perish. I shut the book and went out. As I walked alone, I said within myself: 'What if a sudden death had seized me, as it has my brother? What if it should seize me now? Why am I preserved? Blessed Jesus, Thou art very gracious. Shall none of Thy warnings prevail with me? Shall Thy longsuffering mercy find no love in return?' The tears stood in my eyes. 'Surely through Thine own grace, I will not offend any more. I will renounce every known sin.' I then felt a sincerity in prayer which I had never before experienced. I was frequent and fervent in my supplications for deliverance from my besetting sin. I trusted in God, and found deliverance. The eyes of my understanding have ever since been opening to another and another corruption of my nature; and I trust that with respect to every one of them the same process of sanctification has begun, and will be finally completed."

According to Mr Nesbit's own statement, as afterwards given to intimate friends in India, he experienced at the time of his conversion less of glowing emotion than is accorded to many, when they have passed from death to life. He saw his sin and exposure to condemnation; and conscience testified against him, in no ambiguous terms, as having lived without God. Ere long he saw the full free offer of pardon through faith in a crucified Redeemer; and he exclaimed, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." No melting joy, no floods of emotion followed; still, when

he cast himself on the Divine mercy, he did not dare to doubt that his sins had been forgiven; for "He was faithful that had promised." Among the means that were afterwards blessed to deepen spiritual feeling, he distinctly refers to affliction. "I turned to the Lord," he says, "when in perfectly good health; but I made little progress in the Divine life until I was visited with sickness."

It is to be regretted that there are no journals of Mr Nesbit's connected with this unspeakably important period of his history. One would especially wish to see how his feelings as a student of theology were affected—in what a new and awful light the office of "an ambassador for Christ" appeared—what conflicts of soul he may have undergone before he now saw that he was "called of God" to the office he had before so rashly "taken to himself," and what a sacredness of interest was shed on those preparatory studies, that had hitherto drawn him merely by an intellectual charm.

We have few records regarding his course of reading while he was a student of divinity. Being employed, as we have seen, in teaching, he availed himself of the liberty of taking what were called "partial sessions" at the Theological Hall. The student who took a partial session, merely enrolled his name, received subjects for his exercises and discourses, delivered any of these that he had already prepared, attended the lectures for a week or so, and then returned home. Mr Nesbit's first three divinity sessions were of this unsatisfactory kind. It is interesting to note that his first "full session" was taken after his spiritual awakening—commencing a few months after that infinitely important event when "all things had become new." The theological curriculum at St Andrews was at that time one of the most complete in Scotland, including

Systematic Theology, Oriental Languages, Biblical Criticism, and Church History. Some of the professors were men of considerable note. We are indebted to a friend and fellow-student of Mr Nesbit's for the following interesting notice of St Mary's College, as it then was.

"Dr George Hill, the Principal of St Mary's, died in Dec. 1819, during the session previous to that in which Mr Nesbit began his theological course. The late Principal Haldane succeeded him in all his offices. At that period the present Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Dr John Lee, was Professor of Church History; Dr John Cook, author of the "Enquiry into the Books of the New Testament," was Professor of Divinity; and Dr Buist was Professor of Oriental Languages. Mr Nesbit must have attended the lectures given by Dr Lee and by Dr Cook; and also, as I think, the lectures given by Dr Haldane. He would also have the benefit of hearing the criticisms or discourses given by students. The discourses were read and criticised by the professors; but during his first session as Principal, Dr Haldane declined to express any opinion, except in the most general terms. The criticisms of Dr Lee and Dr Cook were admirable. Both were then in the full vigour of their powers; both were excellent scholars, and able as they were as lecturers in their several departments, their criticisms were perhaps still more valuable. With the exception of his first, and perhaps his second partial session, Mr Nesbit could not have been in any sense a student under Dr Lee; but, unless I am greatly mistaken, he enjoyed to some considerable extent the benefit of Dr Cook's lectures. By many of the students these lectures were not appreciated. There may have been some faults of style, but they were characterised by several very high qualities, calculated to fix the attention of all able and willing to pursue abstract

trains of thought, and altogether so thorough, and so enriched by a familiar acquaintance with all professional learning, and so indicative of decided ability, that they must have been greatly admired by Mr Nesbit. There was no examination on the subject of the lectures, until this was introduced by Principal Haldane, who made use of Dr Hill's Lectures as a text-book; the lectures, however, were the subject of constant discussion among the more intelligent students. Beyond the prescribed Discourses, which were very few, and such essays as were voluntarily given in by those competing for Grey's Prize, there were no written exercises. The amount of bold discussion in our rooms and walks, and in the Theological Society, had its advantages, and stirred up perhaps to greater mental activity; but the absence of all written examinations, and the limited extent to which any kind of composition was made essential, must have been detrimental."

Mr Nesbit made himself master, probably about this time, of Dr Hill's "Lectures in Divinity,"—a work which afterwards was used by Dr Chalmers as a text-book in Edinburgh, and is generally admitted to be one of the most judicious digests of Calvinistic theology that have appeared, exhibiting, too, a large amount of careful reading, particularly in the Divines posterior to the Reformation. In Church History Mr Nesbit's reading was not extensive, nor was he able fully to make up afterwards for the deficiency. His study of Hebrew and the cognate dialects must also have been limited; but he was able to pay some attention to Hebrew in India, much regretting that he had not made a conquest of so important a language in his academical days. In Biblical Criticism his attainments were far higher. Campbell's well-known work on the Gospels, with the preliminary dissertations;

Middleton on the Greek Article, and such works, he seems to have studied with close attention. But he never read rapidly or extensively, nor did he very easily gather up facts of any kind, historical or scientific. His mind was slow and accurate, fond of penetrating to principles, and when it had seized an important point, of scrutinising it in every possible relation, so that his applications of an old truth often struck his hearers with the force of originality. His linguistic talent was logical as much as philological. He did not rapidly acquire a language, nor had he a very extensive stock of words.

During the last two years of his attendance at St Andrews, Mr Nesbit came in contact with Dr Chalmers. That distinguished man, no less remarkable for his power of enkindling the minds of others than for his own noble enthusiasm, wrought a great change in the hitherto quiet, not to say dull, routine of the academic life. Robert Nesbit was one of the many youths who came under the beneficent sway of the "mighty master." He had already finished the required attendance on the class of Moral Philosophy, of which Chalmers became professor in November 1823; but he regularly heard the lectures of the latter, and wrote out as full notes of them as possible.

The following is a notice occurring in a letter to his brother.

"I have the pleasure of giving you the information that the Town Missionary Society, as well as the Students' Association, is flourishing in a manner quite wonderful for St Andrews. Dr Chalmers is carrying all before him. He became President of the Society, and consequently many new members have joined, and will join."

The above is interesting, as containing the first allusion

to the subject of Missions, that occurs in any of Mr Nesbit's papers. He was Treasurer and Secretary of a Missionary Society during the last two years of his residence at St Andrews, 1823–4 and 1824–5. From a letter of Dr Duff's given in the "Memoirs of Dr Chalmers," we learn, that soon after the arrival of the latter, a few of the divinity students formed themselves into a missionary association. Early in the session 1824–5, a general association was established, the small society of the divinity students was united with it, and "thus originated the St Andrews University Society, which ranked among its active friends and supporters, more than one-third of all attending both colleges."* The Society soon had the distinction of sending forth not a few of its members to the high places of the field. Robert Nesbit led the way. He was followed by Alexander Duff, William S. Mackay, and David Ewart—all of whom are still spared to labour in the Calcutta Mission of the Free Church of Scotland. John Adam was a fifth devoted evangelist, who went from St Andrews to India in connection with the London Missionary Society; but his course soon came to a close. John Urquhart was another of their companions,—a young man of fervent piety, and in every way of rare promise, who had early devoted himself to a missionary life, but was cut off at the age of eighteen.

That so many of her sons—and such sons—should have given themselves "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," and so set a great example, *at that time*, when the mind of Scotland had hardly begun to awake to the grandeur and paramount claims of the Missionary enterprise—this certainly was no small honour to the venerable University. The old tree was putting forth

* Glasgow set the example to St Andrews; and John Urquhart seems to have taken a lead in the extension. See his Memoir, vol. i. p. 70.

new blossoms. It could no longer be said, as it might have been before—

> Qualis frugifero quercus sublimis in agro
> Pondere fixa suo est, nudosque per æra ramos
> Effundens, trunco non frondibus efficit umbram.

For we hardly require to remind, at all events our Scottish readers, how many men, renowned in the religious life of the country, have been associated with St Andrews. A Scotchman's heart swells as he writes or reads the names of the martyrs Hamilton and Wishart, of Knox, Melville, Henderson, Rutherford, Halyburton; for such men, more than even her patriot sons, Wallace and Bruce,—far more than her philosophers and poets,—have stirred the spirit of the nation, and made Scotland what she is.

Mr Nesbit next accepted the situation of tutor in a family in Caithness, being appointed on the recommendation of Dr Chalmers. His occupations while in that part of the country will be sufficiently understood from the following extract from a letter to his mother :—

June 24. 1825. . . . . I read a chapter to the children, and pray with them every morning and evening, and I find that they eagerly imbibe at least the stories of the Old and New Testaments. . . . . Sabbath is a very happy day. I finish the boy's Sabbath-day exercises between ten and twelve. Set off, on foot, for R——; arrive at a quarter after one, the distance being five miles. Listen to a few sentences of Gaelic, being the end of a sermon preached in that language. Hear the well-known words, 'Let us sing,' &c., in my own beloved tongue; attend to a regular service in English, with the exception of a Gaelic benediction, the Celts, in the mean time, sitting quite patiently, whether because they understand the English, or because they are

waiting for the Gaelic benediction, I know not. Return home; dine as usual at five o'clock. Cross the Halladale by an embankment of stones, about six. Enter a wretched hut, with several holes in it to let out the smoke, and no less than one pane of glass in one of them to admit the light, which is a great luxury in the Melvich, as they call it. Call over the names of sixty-five individuals, boys and girls; take in the tracts which have been lent out; and then go through the regular work of the evening, questioning and explaining. I need an interpreter when I have to speak to the mere children of the school. They learn their verses and questions in English; but they do not understand a word of them, as they hear nought but Gaelic at home. I then return home about nine o'clock. . . . . In answer to C.'s queries, I have to state that I do not like the ministers much. Most of them (the parish minister is an exception) are squeamishly orthodox, so that they dare not dwell on any subject but the fall of man and justification through free grace. I am sorry and ashamed that I have been very little benefited by their instructions. . . . Her second query regards natural food, as the former regarded spiritual. I live very well upon what is daily set before me; and to crown the good girl's happiness, tell her I have a contented mind. Nevertheless, I should be very glad to receive an appointment to a situation equally good some hundred miles nearer my father's residence."

Soon after the date of the above letter, Mr Nesbit commenced a diary, which he continued with some regularity for four months. Many of the entries are deeply interesting, as revealing his spiritual progress; yet we do not need to quote much. His advancement in the divine life presented nothing uncommon, most young converts passing through an experience not dissimilar. There is intense

self-scrutiny, and deep self-loathing; and that is surely right. Yet the question may well occur, whether the counsel of some Christian friend, instructed in "the way of God more perfectly," might not have been of service in leading him to rest more simply and entirely on Him "mighty to save," whose all-fulness answers to the deepest of our spiritual necessities.

"*September* 19. 1825.—I resolved to watch and pray more than I had previously done. But watching and prayer are only maintained while we continue sensible of our utter dependence upon the Father of Spirits. A diary I have often heard recommended, as admirably fitted to keep up a sense of our dependence, and therefore resolve to keep one. May no pursuit interrupt the hopeful work, and may God render it a blessing to my soul!

"About half a year ago I was almost satisfied that I was in a safe state. But since reading Edwards' sermons on Justification, Pressing into the Kingdom, &c., I begin to entertain doubts of my state. Is the Lord punishing me for my late sins as a father doth his child whom he loves? Or is he striving with me by His Spirit, to bring me to a Saviour in whom I have not yet trusted? Got Colquhoun of Leith's Catechism. My spirit rebels against its statements somewhat still. But I resolve to examine it carefully and compare it with Scripture. There is nothing so harsh in Scripture as in those human productions. . . . I had the story of the young ruler to comment upon in the hearing of my pupils, their mother, and the servants; and did not do it with a right spirit."

"*September* 20.—I awoke, and found I had enjoyed a refreshing sleep during the night; and felt some slender gratitude accordingly. But oh, how unthankful do I appear, when I compare my gratitude with God's goodness. I have

myself very much to blame for keeping no set time for my morning reading and prayer. I generally sleep too long to get them over before breakfast; and after breakfast I am frequently interrupted in the midst of them by the entrance of my pupils for their lessons.

"*September* 21.—What an immense wandering of the mind there is in my prayers! There is scarcely anything that has a greater tendency to make me cry out—'I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes'—than one of my prayers. I see more wickedness in one prayer than in all the performances of a whole day. Enable us, good Lord, to fix our attention on Thee, while we do eternal homage at Thy footstool.

"I have lived a day by no means remarkable for the cherishing or retaining of any vile thoughts. But neither has it been remarkable for the maintenance or nourishment of any pious thoughts and feelings. The whole has presented a dull lifeless level, varied with no aspirations after holiness, and the friendship of the High and Holy One. O let me be continually putting to myself the question which Jesus Christ himself put to one who was not more obliged to Jesus, as to bodily things, than I am: 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' Teach me, Lord, who he is, that I may believe on Him. Let me know Him aright, and then there will be no danger of my failing to trust in Him.

"*September* 22.—I had some striking thoughts last night after retiring to bed. They made my heart palpitate. Do they betoken the operation of the Spirit? I had been reading a short account of the death of Voltaire. His exclamation, 'O Christ, O Jesus Christ,' is certainly most awful and horrific. Let me use the same language every hour, which he used at his last, but with feelings quite the opposite of his. Let my exclamation be that of supplication,

arising from faith and truth; and let it often be that of confidence and joy. In Horne's Introduction I find the numerous and malignant attacks of infidels against the Scriptures. How very far gone these men are! They stick at nothing. Will God ever reclaim such men? I am now quite struck and astonished at their obstinate resistance of evidence. Yet it is not many years since I was an objector in my own small way. Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast reclaimed me. I now, at least, reverence the Scriptures, believe them to be divinely inspired, and consequently to be a perfect rule of faith and practice, and wish to find out their meaning, and to submit myself to all their doctrines and requirements. But with how little prayer—with how little dependence, on the Divine Spirit—do I study them! How little accordingly do I see in them, either to enlighten the understanding, soften the affections, or purify the heart! It appears to me that one tract well written does me more good than many chapters of the Bible. In this there is something dreadfully wrong. . . . Since my last illness I find that I possess more sympathy than I formerly had. Let me retain such a temper. Let me even look upon dangers, distresses, and deaths of others with a pitying eye, and regard them with a prayerful heart.

"*September* 23.—I may be thankful that it has been given to me to see and feel the propriety of prayer on all occasions. The last time I had pupils under me, I do not think that I ever offered up one prayer in regard to them. When I was told by a lady that I needed not expect to do them any good without prayer, I thought that she uttered the language of weakness and folly. Now I utter the same language myself, and see its propriety, and feel its force. Make me more prayerful, Heavenly Father!

"*September* 24.—I could not pray this morning. I could not fix my mind on the business for half a minute. This is very frequently the case with me. How deplorable is the fact! How little concern it displays! It proves either that grace has not yet been imparted to me; or that it is but beginning to discover itself; or that it has suffered a sad diminution, because I have grieved the Spirit and quenched His influences. . . . I experienced a few melancholy impressions as the light was departing this evening. The rush of the river, the roar of the ocean, the flitting of the clouds, and all the objects and appearances of nature, do often press upon my spirit in a manner peculiarly painful. I find a disagreeable want in my mind which I have no prospect of getting supplied. I see nothing around me adequate for the supply of it. Lord, teach me ever to look to Jesus Christ as the supplier of all my wants, and as the only true way to that happy state in which want, and melancholy, and sickness are never mentioned or felt."

"*September* 25, *Sabbath.*— . . . . . Have I been preserved from polluting this holy and honourable day? Alas, I have not! Even I, whose business and almost constant employment it is to search the Scriptures and meditate upon them, do not preserve a religious and scriptural train of thought. What a hard task they must have, whose daily employments are completely secular! Yet the Lord is able to keep their hearts and minds, and willing to do so, if they will only depend upon His strength. How can I expect to be preserved from polluting the Sabbath, when I make so little preparation for it, and when its approach calls forth so little of the spirit of prayer? As the saints are described as waiting and hasting unto the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven, so ought I to wait and haste unto the coming of the Sabbath. Christ does on that day really descend from

heaven; and although we do not mark any outward glory, His presence in His church is not the less real. Let me ever consider myself as meeting with Jesus within the walls of the earthly tabernacle, and let me long for that period when I shall meet with Him and abide with Him for ever in the sanctuary above. How did I meet with Jesus to-day? During the last prayer I was settling the nature of the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament. The ideas relative thereto took complete possession of my mind. I knew I was offending my Maker and grieving the Holy Spirit; yet I could not, or would not give them up.

"*September* 27.— . . . . I asked the Lord to chastise me rather than let me go on in sin. Now again I wish to be freed from the chastisement, though perhaps, if I was, I should again fall into sin.

"*September* 28.—I have not had time for the entertainment or nourishment of any thought or feeling purely religious. We beseech thee, O Lord, to mingle such thoughts and feelings with our most secular employments.

"*October* 2, *Sabbath.*—I experienced more fixedness of attention, and more earnestness in prayer last night, than I have done for many weeks. The Lord's name be praised for it. This morning I left myself no time for reading or prayer. Let me well consider the day on which this happened, and be ashamed and confounded. Yet I was not deserted at church. I have had a more agreeable day than I generally have.

"*October* 3.—I have written four, nay, six pages of a sermon to-day. But there's nothing in them. Reveal unto me, O Lord, the mysteries of the Gospel, and let all my discourses shew forth the glory of Jesus Christ. Help me in the writing of the rest of my sermon, and cause me to depend more upon Thee for light and strength.

"*October* 5.— . . . . . So I am to leave my Sunday scholars at Melvich and Port-Kerry! They were, and still are, most wicked children. I wonder whether one of them has hid the word of God in his heart.' What will become of all the children in this quarter?

"*October* 6.—I have been very much excited and irritated in teaching to-day. Let my moderation, O Lord, be known unto all men; for the Lord is at hand. Preserve my temper calm and sweet at all times.

"*October* 7.—What Jesus said to his disciples about watching, he said unto all. Of course he said unto me among the rest, Watch. Lord, prepare me for death. At this moment my heart is exceedingly hard; and I care not for death, or judgment, or eternity. And no wonder. I have been thinking for above half an hour about delivering capital sermons in St Andrews before the students, and about the good I shall do, and the instruction I shall afford, and perhaps, more than all, about the admiration I shall win. I have allowed such thoughts to roll quietly on. I have not felt their sinfulness; I have not deplored them; I have not confessed them; I have not asked forgiveness for them. Lord, take pity, and soften my hard and stony heart. Mine is as hard as the nether millstone. I think, however, that I know my own heart better than I used to do. When I was last ill, I lay trembling because I could not repose my soul upon God. I did not say within myself, Were I only well again I should be a changed man. I knew that, when I should recover, I should be as dull and stupid, and hard-hearted, and fearless as ever. Surely, O Lord, there is no strength but from Thee. There is nothing of tenderness of conscience, humility of mind, contrition of heart, reliance of soul, or purity of thought and desire, but what comes directly from Thyself.

October 8.—I was in some measure enabled to pray last night and this morning. I have prayed little during the day, and yet I have visited the sick, and gone a round of other duties. Oh, how easy it is to give away money, to exercise forbearance, and forgiveness, and condescension, and kindness, compared with what it is to live a life of faith on the Son of God; to rest and depend on Him continually! Have I faith? let me still ask myself. And O Lord, let the time speedily arrive when I shall be enabled to answer, with assurance, that I have. Nothing less can support the sinking soul upon a dying bed.

"*October* 9, *Sabbath.*—I always find harm from speaking with keenness and bitterness of the faults of others. I generally fall into the very fault against which I have been inveighing myself."

Mr Nesbit remained in the north of Scotland for six months. During that time he was licensed as a preacher of the gospel by the Presbytery of Caithness. Towards the end of November 1825, he proceeded to the city of Exeter, to act as tutor in the family of Mr A. N. Groves. Many of our readers must be already familiar with this name. A Memoir of Mr Groves has been published, and is one of the most remarkable of missionary biographies. He was a man of rare devotedness. The time Mr Nesbit spent in his family was one of the happiest periods of his life, so far as intercourse with his fellow men was concerned.

The entries in his diary at this time shew him "following on to know the Lord"; yet there are many lamentations over wandering thoughts in prayer, coldness of heart, and the difficulty of "keeping himself in the love of God." Indeed, he afterwards speaks of this period as having been one of "sore spiritual depression."

"*November* 28. 1825.—It is considerably more than a

month since I wrote anything in my diary. And what a dark dismal month it has been! I have had no prayers; no warmth of affection towards God or man; no desire to promote the kingdom of Christ. My mind has been quite dissipated. I have been afraid to enter into the company of the ungodly, and that justly; but I have also been afraid to join the society of the pious. I knew I could not sympathise with them. I looked upon myself as a leper, and as altogether unfit to enter into the company of the clean. I have lately spent two Sabbaths in travelling; and my mind is utterly spoiled. I am now landed at Exeter, and am set down in a very pious family. I have to teach the master of this family. . . . Religion is in this city at a very low ebb. There is a large and elegant Socinian chapel in the city. In this very chapel a man, calling himself a Presbyterian, preached for one part of the day. Destroy, we beseech Thee, all erroneous doctrines and false practice.

"*November* 29.—This morning, in examining my pupils on the Scriptures, and in praying with them, I felt some feeble glow of affection, and experienced some small enjoyment. The Lord's name be praised for all His mercies. O let me cherish every spark of affection, and let the Lord Himself kindle it into a flame.

"*December* 2.—I have finished Scott's "Force of Truth," and admire the man and the book exceedingly. The Lord give me grace to inquire candidly, and diligently, and sincerely, and prayerfully, as he did, and lead me to true conclusions as to doctrine, and to a right frame of spirit as to precept.

"*December* 5.—Last night I joined the company of three men of the Established Church, who statedly meet for the purpose of instructing the Jews. I went without preparatory prayer. Of course the work was a heartless one.

I was called upon to read and pray, and these offices I performed without any feeling of their importance; I knew their importance, but I could not enter into the spirit of my office.

"*December* 6.—Last night and this morning I prayed in an audible whisper, and found the advantage of doing so. Still my attention was not fixed upon the proper objects. I considered the propriety of my language, and the rounding of my periods, and the inflections of my voice. How true is Chalmers's account of our utter ungodliness! His book on that subject is excellent beyond all things I ever read in any human composition. The Lord preserve him long in life, in health, and in usefulness.

"*December* 7.—Let me not indulge vain hopes. Let me be content with such things as I have. Let me consider my unfitness for the high and awful office of the ministry.

"*December* 12.—My heart was absent in the midst of the prayers of yesterday afternoon. Neither did I derive much benefit from the sermon. I was much ashamed of myself when I observed the acute feelings with which an aged man regarded the tender expressions and promises of the gospel. It is very seldom that I have any feelings at all. .... I had somewhat more of the spirit of earnestness, both in my prayers in the presence of the two young Jews and their instructors, and in that delivered in the presence of Jesus alone, than usually falls to my lot.

"*December* 22.—My brother informs me that my mother is still in a poor state of health. I am ashamed of my cold and unbelieving prayers for her restoration to bodily health, and her establishment in the faith of the gospel. Lord, take away my hard and stony heart, and give me a heart of flesh."

Early in the year 1826 his diary closes. The concluding entries are of a far more joyful character than any that have been yet given. Thus of the first two Sabbaths of January we find him recording; "At those times religious truths told upon my heart; and I felt with how much satisfaction and delight I could sit down on the lowest seat at the feet of Jesus, provided I enjoyed the smile of His countenance."

Why this blessed "enlargement of heart" was now vouchsafed, may appear as we proceed.

CHAPTER II.

RESOLUTION TO BE A MISSIONARY—ACCEPTANCE BY THE SCOTTISH MISSIONARY SOCIETY—VOYAGE TO INDIA.

THERE is reason to believe that the "spiritual depression" of which Robert Nesbit spoke, was, in part at least, owing to a struggle which had commenced in his mind, but the existence of which he had not dared to confess even to himself. As Secretary of the Students' Association at St Andrews, he was often led to think and to speak of the solemn claims of the missionary enterprise. His own growth in grace, the fervent expositions of Chalmers, the sweet attractiveness of his friend John Urquhart's example,—all these things must have contributed to deepen his impression of the importance of the subject. Still, for a year and a half after the matter was thus prominently before him, the question of becoming himself a missionary seems never to have occurred to him, or, if it occurred, to have been unhesitatingly answered in the negative. The question was first suggested to him by a fellow-student, in the commencement of 1825; but his decision in the negative was prompt and peremptory. Again the point was mooted by a friend early in November of the same year; but still, "the subject," he says, "was unwelcome," and even "strange." It is clear, then, that

the suggestion of his fellow-student at St Andrews had left no impression; and now this second admonition was equally fruitless. But almost from the commencement of their acquaintance, Mr Groves sought to press the question earnestly on the attention of his young friend. Then must have commenced that struggle between inclination and conscience, of which Mr Nesbit seems hardly to have been aware; but which aggravated, if it did not originate, the spiritual darkness under which he often laboured at this time. By the end of the year, however, all this had passed away. What is rather remarkable—seeing that his mind was seldom liable to sudden impulses—when the conviction came, it came like a flash from heaven. But this will best be told in his own words, afterwards given in reply to queries addressed to him by the Missionary Society.

"The general want of missionaries in the different societies for the spread of the gospel among the heathen, was first slightly urged upon me in the beginning of 1825, by a member of our little Association at St Andrews. At that time I looked upon the missionary life as one on which I could never enter. Sickness, hardship, suffering, and death, always presented themselves to my mind in unmitigated horror, whenever it was contemplated as affecting my own person. I therefore contented myself with saying, 'The Lord will provide,' and pleased myself with thinking I should do a great deal at home for the spread of the gospel abroad. In the beginning of November last (1825) the subject was again presented to me, in a more striking manner, by Mr Bridges. He represented to me the wants of the Scottish Missionary Society, and asked whether I had any wish to enter upon the great work of preaching the gospel to the heathen. The nature of my constitution, and

the general state of my health, readily furnished me with a plausible answer in the negative. Then, too, I felt confident I should never be a missionary. The subject was again urged upon me by Mr Groves. He spoke of the slothfulness of the Christian Church in general as to the work of missions, and particularly of that part of it to which I belonged, insinuating that the high Calvinistic tenets of the Scottish Church were unfavourable to a missionary spirit. As to any impression he might wish to make upon me, with a view of stirring me up to the high purposes and aims of a missionary, I felt myself, under his hand, as a rock of adamant. I distinctly recollect of saying within myself—'Well, you may speak, you may argue, you may provoke; but it will not, it cannot, have any effect upon me.' His own decision to go abroad as a missionary, and the powerful appeals of his pamphlet, left me in the same state of mind as before. In the mean time, I had been labouring for some months under a sore spiritual depression. With all outward comfort and prosperity around me, I felt myself miserable. In such a frame of mind, but as firmly determined against missionary exertion as ever, on the 30th of December I went out to take my usual walk in the garden. I had not walked long before the thought seized me that I might yet be a missionary. After a moment's reflection, 'The thing is clear,' said I, 'as the light of day. The exertions and sufferings of a missionary cannot make me more uncomfortable than I am; nay, I trust that God will so bless them as to render them the means of promoting my peace, and comfort, and joy. I cannot now accept of a Scottish church without the idea continually haunting me that I ought to be elsewhere. The thought is from the Lord, and I shall go drooping and creeping all my life unless I yield to it and indulge it. I am sure I should be right in going

out as a missionary. I am not sure I should be right in staying at home. Let me feel myself in the path of duty, and then shall I feel, underneath me and round about me, the everlasting arms. But to what Society shall I offer myself? To that of my own beloved Church.' I burned with desire to communicate my thoughts to the Society, and so vain and wicked was I, as to wish that my communication should be the first that made its appearance among them. Indeed, I cared not at that time whether any other individual should offer, as I was anxious to engross to myself all the pleasure of communicating enjoyment, and to secure to myself the individual affections of the Directors, and of the friends of the Society in general. The idea that I should enjoy the love, and possess the prayers of all the religious people in Scotland, was to me exceedingly delightful. God knoweth whether, during those troubled moments, I did not think of enjoying their admiration also. I fear I did; I know I did. But the same God knoweth also, that that thought was not the prevailing one even then, and that it has been fading away ever since. The enjoyment of sweet communion with God on the Sabbath immediately succeeding, set, as it were, the Divine seal to the thought and desire of my heart. Since that time this desire has never left me, but has been acquiring strength and firmness all along to the present day."

So wrote he about seven months after the important resolution had been formed. In his diary of the memorable date, Friday, December 30, he had said :—

"My mind has almost come to a determination on the subject. I am astonished that Scotland has produced, and does produce, so few missionaries. I shall write to some of my fellow-students on the subject, and try to stir them up. Lord, make me pray more!"

A few weeks after he thus clearly saw it to be his duty to become a missionary to the heathen, he communicated the fact to his relatives. Anticipating in some degree the effect this announcement would have on all at home, he endeavours thus gently to break the matter to his sister :—

"I am myself occupied at present in deliberating which of two plans it would be proper for me to adopt,—whether I should remain and preach the gospel in Britain, or offer myself to the Scottish Missionary Society, to preach the gospel where they may appoint. I think I can clearly see that the latter plan would be right, and I have little doubt that it would also be the best. When I think of it in relation to my father and mother, and brothers and sisters, the thought is a sore one; but I feel, at the same time, that no degree of pain which may accompany any duty, can form an excuse for neglecting it. The Baptist Mission is, I believe, but poorly supplied; the Independent Mission is supplied still worse; and the Scottish Presbyterian Mission worst of all. If missions, in general, are not supplied, the religion of the world will not merely remain stationary; instead of advancing, or standing still, it will go backward. And if the Scottish Mission in particular is not supplied, disgrace and ruin will come upon our beloved church. I am not sure that any person will go as a missionary if I myself refuse; and if scores were to arise saying, 'Here am I, send me,' perhaps even then I should not feel myself comfortable in staying at home. Were I to take a church at home, with the impression hanging about me that I should have gone abroad, I should have no satisfaction or happiness in the performance of the duties attached to such a situation. This intelligence, I fear, will be a new source of anxiety to you, and to all the members of the dear family of Sunnyside. But we must learn firmly to believe that the

Lord careth for us, and then cast all our cares upon Him. I trust that this may have the effect of increasing and invigorating your prayers. Perhaps —— may yet be a missionary; the Society would gladly receive him. At any rate, let us all be missionaries at home. I had lately a letter from John Urquhart; he keeps steady to his purpose."

The result of this communication was that he was instantly assailed with earnest remonstrance and passionate entreaty. Every effort was put forth to shake his determination. He was disappointed, greatly pained; but his convictions as to the course prescribed to him by God were not affected in the least degree. He writes to his sister:—

"I had no idea that you could be so violently opposed to the indulgence of the thoughts I described in my last letter as I find you to be. I did expect a complaint, a remonstrance, an admonition; but decided opposition I did not expect. . . . . Another circumstance which induced me to think that your decided opposition was altogether out of the question was, that we all consented to part with Benjamin for life. 'He was permitted to go,' said I to myself, 'for the purpose of making himself rich; I shall certainly be permitted to go for the purpose of making others rich.' He went to live among thieves; I cannot go to live among worse. He went shielded by the prayers of a father and a mother, of brothers and sisters; I shall go shielded by the same, and by the prayers of all the religious people in Scotland besides.'"

His relatives also plied him with various dissuasive *arguments*. One of them was his admitted incapacity for extemporaneous address. He thus answers:—

"The objection drawn from my slowness of conception and of utterance is also of considerable weight. Yet we ought to remember that Jehovah did not listen to it when

it was proposed by Moses. Besides, I did not mean to offer myself to the Society as a preacher, but chiefly as a teacher of children, a superintendent of schools, and a corrector of the works that may be printed by the missionary press. For teaching children you know that I have been favoured with peculiar talents. In this way I should be stationary; while others, who have a talent for extemporaneous preaching, would form an itinerant body. My want of address in such a situation would be very little felt. . . . . It is the good of you all that I consult in even thinking of such a measure. I am sure that it would be the means of drawing down countless blessings on your heads. It used to be a favourite picture which I set before my eyes, namely, that of a comfortable manse in some warm inland part of Scotland, with my father, and mother, and Ann, and myself for its inmates. But I am confident, if my health permit, that I shall benefit my father, and my mother, and Ann, and all of you, much more by leaving them than by staying with them."

In the month of February 1826, Mr Nesbit received an invitation to go out as minister to an English, or rather Scotch colony, near Buenos Ayres. The offer tempted him for a moment, but only for a moment. He thus refers to the matter in a letter to his sister :—

"Soon the darkness was dissipated, and order arose out of confusion. I perceived that the situation was just a kirk of Scotland carried across the Atlantic into a more fruitful soil, and more genial climate. I perceived, at the same time, that hundreds might be obtained to go out to a fine country, an honourable office, and a good living. A Briton would there find himself quite at home and comfortable, for as Mr T—— remarks, there are perhaps 2000 English in the city of Buenos Ayres; and such is the constant intercourse between England and that city, that one could supply himself with al-

most any thing there upon nearly the same terms as in England. These considerations clearly pointed out to me my duty, and the predictions of my dear friend John [John Urquhart] were happily verified. I refused the offer, and was restored to my former tranquillity and comfort."

Time only served to deepen Mr Nesbit's sense of duty in reference to the heathen; and in the month of July he made an offer of his services to the "Scottish Missionary Society." The evangelistic efforts of the Presbyterian Churches are not now conducted through "Societies"; the whole Church is, so to speak, a missionary society, and conducts its operations through a committee which is appointed at each annual General Assembly. The Church of Scotland had not embarked, as a church, in the missionary work at this time; otherwise Mr Nesbit would probably have offered himself to it, for he had a strong attachment to what he calls his "beloved church." The Scottish Missionary Society was, however, largely supported by the evangelical portion of the Church of Scotland. But "his acceptance by a missionary institution," writes the Rev. Dr Wilson of Bombay, "was merely a circumstantial, and not an essential event connected with his missionary life. Such was his devotedness to the cause of missions, that I believe he would have found his way to the heathen world in the face of the maledictions and oppositions of the church, had they been possible, as well as with its benedictions and encouragements."

The Directors of the Scottish Missionary Society were accustomed to send a list of queries to young men offering their services, with a view to learn their character and qualifications; and they also requested the candidate to name any parties to whom reference might be made on the subject. Mr Nesbit suggested Dr Chalmers and Mr Groves as

referees. In his reply to the Directors, Dr Chalmers writes :—

"*Kelton Manse, August* 15, 1826.—My dear Sir,—I think that Mr Nesbit has very few equals in missionary qualification. . . . .

"1. I think that he has superior piety, rational, yet devoted and ardent. 2. And talents greatly above the average. I speak of his general talents; but I understand, and indeed know, from Dr Hunter of St Andrews, that he is an excellent linguist. 3. His religious principles are Calvinistic. 4. He is a diligent student, and ardent in the pursuit of knowledge. 5. He has distinguished himself in various places by his exertions in the cause of Christian usefulness.

"I sum up my remaining knowledge of Mr Nesbit. I should judge him to be quite disinterested. I never saw aught like pride or petulance about him. I never observed any infirmity of temper or imprudence of conduct."

From Mr Groves's letter we quote the following :—

"I may perhaps say, that my impression is that the peculiar structure of Mr Nesbit's mind, as it appears to me during our intercourse, adapts him for two departments of missionary labour, particularly schools and translation. . . .

"In conclusion, I would say that I have seldom met with a Christian of more simple sincerity of purpose than Mr Nesbit, nor one who lived more under the habitually constraining power of gospel motives and gospel objects; and I believe him to be one who is truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness. I have hardly ever been acquainted with one in whose religious consistency and single devotedness of heart I had more confidence, and in the integrity of whose character I could more comfortably and freely rely."

The list of queries submitted to Mr Nesbit himself

amounted to nineteen. They referred to his age; health; advantages of education; views of Christian doctrine; the mode in which his mind became impressed with religion; the motives that actuated him to engage in missionary labour; his notions of a missionary's duties, difficulties,—and so on. The paper of questions is far-reaching. One query is, whether he is prepared to yield all due respect and subjection to the civil authorities of the country to which he may be sent, and to abstain from all interference in the political affairs of such country? Mr Nesbit replies to this last query in the affirmative. Whether he felt that the expression in the latter clause was somewhat unqualified, we have no means of judging. We have given above (page 27) an important extract from Mr Nesbit's letters in reply to the queries. The following, also, will be found interesting.

His views of the leading principles of Christianity :—

"My views of Christian truth are strictly Calvinistic. At present, however, I should not be inclined to dwell much on the doctrines of predestination, election, and particular redemption. That love wherewith God so loved the world as to 'give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life,' I desire to be the principal theme of my discourses. In reference to Socinianism and Antinomianism, I need scarcely add, that I believe in the divine and human natures of Christ united in one person, in his three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and in the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost; and that, while I consider good works as impossible before salvation commences, and in no respect a condition of its commencement, I believe them to be indispensably necessary to its continuance and consummation."

His grounds for regarding himself a converted man :—

"I do indulge the hope that I am a partaker of divine grace; and that for the following reasons. I am conscious of a desire to know and do the whole will of God. Sinful habits, in which I had long indulged, and which were dear to me as a right hand or a right eye, have been subjugated and rooted out. I see every day more clearly the natural alienation of the heart from God, my own personal depravity and guilt, and my entire dependence on divine grace for pardon and purification. I feel every day more deeply the necessity of prayer. I am afraid to enter on the smallest duty without it; and in the exercise of it I sometimes enjoy happy communion with 'the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.' I have an increasing love towards the word of God. His Sabbaths are my delight. His people are the objects of my strongest affections. I hate the company of the wicked, and choose to rejoice in the society of the righteous. I am sensible of a desire for the promotion of God's glory and the extension of His kingdom, and feel willing to leave my country and friends to further these glorious ends."

His motives for becoming a missionary :—

"My purpose of becoming a missionary to the heathen originated from a desire to do what I conceived to be the will of God; from a fear of His frown should I refuse to go forth as his ambassador to the most distant region of the globe; from a hope of enjoying His peculiar favour should I sacrifice my own outward ease and comfort to the promotion of His cause; from a dread of coldness and indifference in the spiritual life; and from a desire of advancement in holiness, and establishment in the peace and comfort of the gospel. The same purpose was strengthened by a desire of securing the attention, and affection, and prayers of the religious people in Scotland; by a desire of vindicating

Calvinism from the charge of coldness and sloth in the great work of evangelizing the world; and by a desire of spreading the doctrines, forms, and government of a church, which, in its constitution, I believe to be the most perfect on earth. If a love of admiration was concerned either in originating or confirming this purpose at first, I am not conscious of any such feeling now. Another feeling, however, has perhaps been substituted in its place,—namely, the shame of looking back when once I have put my hand to the plough. I cannot say that I feel a *glow* of compassion for the perishing heathen, or that I *burn* with a desire to make known to them the words of eternal life; and, although I am alive to the honour of my God and Saviour, I cannot say that I am impelled to the work of missions by a disinterested zeal for His glory."

On the duties of a missionary :—

"The duties of a missionary to the heathen I consider to be exceedingly important, arduous, difficult, and trying; as requiring no ordinary talents and acquirements; no common degree of piety and zeal; a temper eminently affectionate, gentle, humble, charitable, meek, forbearing, peaceable, and disinterested; a spirit of constant dependance; and a habit of unceasing prayer. I likewise consider them to be highly honourable, and abundantly delightful to those who engage and persevere therein with their whole heart."

His views of a missionary's trials :—

"I have seriously weighed the privations, hardships, and dangers to which a missionary may be exposed; and I feel willing to make these sacrifices, and to undergo these sufferings, cheered by the prospect that God will be my portion, my shield, and exceeding great reward."

To the Rev. Dr Brown, Secretary of the Scottish Mis-

sionary Society, he thus writes, in returning his answers to the queries—

"*Northumbray House, Exeter, 29th July* 1826.—Rev. and Dear Sir,—I received your printed letter; and after farther consideration of the topics which the Directors recommend to serious reflection, I abide by my former determination to offer myself to the Scottish Missionary Society. I can truly say that I am actuated by none of the motives which the Directors enumerate as being incompatible with the genuine spirit of a missionary; and I only lament that the proper motives exert so feeble an influence on my mind. I am constrained to confess that it was not so much a direct concern for the glory of God, or a love of Christ, or a compassion for immortal souls, that originated my determination, as a desire of advancing my own personal religion, of obtaining more intimate union with God, of relieving myself from that coldness and deadness by which I was benumbed and oppressed, and obtaining that warmth and energy in spiritual things which I felt to be all my comfort and all my joy. I am afraid that this is still my ruling motive, and that the love of God and the love of souls have yet to make a vast progress in my mind, before they exercise over it an influence commanding and supreme.

"The Society may consider me, from this time, as entirely at their disposal. I wait their decision and directions.

"I read Brainerd and Martyn's lives a considerable time ago; and had just finished the last edition of your two volumes on Missions, when your letter arrived.—I am," &c.

Even after matters had proceeded to this length his relatives still clung to the hope that they might see him settled as a parish minister in some comfortable nook in Scotland. His letters to them are full of expostulation and affectionate appeals; and they continue so till he leaves the country.

The following is to his mother:—

"My Dear Mother,—I have read of a good woman who had an only child, and that child 'the *son* of her old age.' He lived with her in his youth, but afterwards left her and went into a desert and remained there. He dressed meanly and fared hardly. He was roughly entreated. A plot was laid against his life. He was cast into prison. He was beheaded. Alas, that a mother should ever have had such a son! We say, 'Alas!' his mother.' We esteem her one of the most unhappy of women. But what says God concerning her? 'Thou art highly *favoured;* the Lord is with thee.' It may, however, be suggested that she saw not the calamities that fell upon her son. Well then, I have read of *another* good woman who had a son, and that, too, an only child. When he was a few days old a murderer sought to kill him; and she was obliged to leave her home, and her kindred, and her country, to escape his violence. After they had both returned home, and had lived together in peace for a considerable number of years, he began to make long journeys through the country, and to expose himself to the dangers of excessive cold and heat, wet and drought. He exposed himself also to the dangers of the deep, and was tried with many a tempest. His labours were exceedingly numerous and great, so much so that his friends thought he was mad, and went to lay hold of him to prevent him from continuing them any longer. But he not only underwent labours, but endured sufferings. He bore the evil thoughts and suspicions, the contradictions and revilings, the accusations and rebukes, the persecutions and assaults, the contempt and derision, of those among whom he laboured. He was at last subjected to sufferings the most excruciating, and to a death the most ignominious. She witnessed his toils, and wants, and pains, and distresses; she witnessed his suf-

ferings; she witnessed his death; she witnessed his burial. These she was called upon to witness when her expectations of his rising glory were great; when he was in the prime of life; when many happy and honourable days appeared to be awaiting him. Yet, according to the judgment of God, this woman was the most 'blessed' of women, and this mother the most 'blessed' of mothers. Surely God's judgment of favour and of blessedness is very different from ours."

Mr Nesbit was ordained to the office of the Holy Ministry by the Presbytery of St Andrews, on the 15th December 1826. "I well remember Mr Nesbit mentioning to me," says Dr Wilson, "that an English Episcopal clergyman, who happened to be present at his ordination, was so affected by the solemn service that he spontaneously came forward and joined in the imposition of hands along with his Presbyterian brethren, thus acting in the early protestant, or rather apostolic, spirit of the Church of England, and calling to our remembrance the fraternal visit of the godly Archbishop Usher to the godly minister, Samuel Rutherford, afterwards Professor of Theology at this very University." Although the attendance on the occasion appears to have been small, the example thus set by one so highly respected, could not have been without influence. Writing to his mother, he says:

"*Edinburgh, 20th Dec.* 1826.—My Dear Mother,—I was ordained on Friday last to the office of the ministry, and returned from St Andrews last night. . . . . I find many young men, both in St Andrews and Edinburgh, who are seriously thinking of the important step which I have taken, and who are making my example a personal concern. Oh! if our faith were only in exercise, how plain our path would appear, and how bright it would shine! You would never repent having given me to Christ, but would rejoice

with a joy before altogether unknown. I trust my visit to Berwick will be blessed to you and to many. There was a time when I dreaded it; but the Lord has cleared my way, and I now desire it.

"Last night I spoke at a Missionary Society. I told the members we had just four requests to make of them. We asked *money*, *labour*, *men*, and *prayers*. A mother of a missionary was present, and came to me after the meeting. She told me that her son was now in Bombay, along with the rest of the Scottish Society's missionaries. She could say little; but she felt much. The tear stood in her eye. After what had been said, she rejoiced that she had fulfilled one of the requests, and that not the least. She could give no *money*, but she had given a *man*."

The Rev. Dr Tweedie, one of his college friends, and in later years still more closely connected with him as Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church, writes thus of Mr Nesbit's last visit to his *alma mater*:—"I remember the general impression produced by his last visit to St Andrews. It was characterised by all the earnestness concentrated upon an enterprise worthy of it all, and more. Some thought it was signalised by the ardour of mind generally displayed when the fire-edge is on the spirit, rather than by the judiciousness which subsequently marked the character of our friend; but that might be owing as much to the general view of mission work, then too common, as to any excess in Mr Nesbit. Altogether his example did good; and, followed as it was by the devotedness of John Urquhart, the noble ardour of Duff, and the calmer zeal of others, tended to make that race of students conspicuous then and still, in the records of our oldest university."

He delivered an address to the Students' Missionary Association at St Andrews, which contains much of faithful

and earnest appeal. It seems to have been published, though we can recover only a somewhat imperfect manuscript. The following passage is interesting as enunciating a weighty truth, and because (as we read his history) his own mental experience was in accordance with the principle he maintains. "He best can paint it who has felt it most."

"A simple notification of God's design, without any hint as to the consequences of neglecting or fulfilling it, ought to have been sufficient to call forth our exertions. But the gracious Spirit of God has availed himself, not only of our sense of obligation, but of our very selfishness, to excite us to the performance of our duty. The same word which makes known to us God's design, makes known also the respective consequences of neglecting, and of diligence in the accomplishment of it. . . . . .

"But let us address those who have known what communion with God is; who have experienced delight in prayer, and in the reading of the word; who have felt the ecstasy of perceiving the meaning of a promise, of appreciating its value, of believing its truth, and pleading its fulfilment. These feelings you have experienced; but they are departed, and you 'go mourning all the day long.' 'Surely,' you are apt to say, 'the Spirit of the Lord hath forsaken me; he hath forgotten to be gracious, and his mercy is clean gone for ever.' I experience none of these joys of which his servants have been made partakers. Where is 'the everlasting consolation and good hope through grace;' where is 'the joy and peace in believing,' of which the apostle represents himself and his spiritual children as possessed?' We answer, you forget the circumstances mentioned in connection with the consolations and the joys, in the possession of which the apostle triumphs. You forget that he speaks of himself as sorrowful, yet

always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. You forget what he wrote to the afflicted Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 3–7). It appears, therefore, that there is an inseparable connection between abounding *labours and sufferings* in the cause of Christ and abounding *consolations*. Believe the declarations of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of his apostle to be true. Throw yourself upon the promise and faithfulness of God. Enter upon the labours of the apostle, and you will enter into the possession of his joys. If to undertake such labours has ever appeared to you your duty or your privilege, how know you that you are not slighting an intimation of the will of God communicated to you by his Spirit? How know you that you are not grieving that Spirit, and quenching his influences? How know you that God is not frowning on you because you have rejected his counsels? And how know you that he will not frown for ever until you have ceased to argue against him, as did Paul himself, for a residence among your own countrymen, and until you have gone, as he has given you a commission, far hence among the Gentiles (Acts xxii. 18–22), these suspicions may haunt you continually. They may enter and disturb and alarm you in the closet, in the family, and in the pulpit. You may go on crouching and creeping through life, without ever daring to lift up your head, or to raise your eyes with confidence to him that sitteth on the throne, because, instead of being irradiated by the light and smiles of his countenance, it is, to your apprehension, only enveloped in clouds and darkness. . . . . Enter upon the missionary work and you will escape all these suspicions, and all this misery. The light of the divine countenance will be lifted up upon you. Your own spiritual interests will be advanced. You will be *obliged* to trust in the Most High, and you will

learn to cast your cares upon Him who careth for you. In the reading of the Word, you will stop to admire and appropriate, and plead many a promise which formerly you passed by, as if it had no meaning and no preciousness. The consolations of Christ will flow in upon you, just as your love and your labours of love flow out towards others. The possession of 'joy in the Holy Ghost' cannot be separated from a desire that all should know and possess the same. Spiritual privileges may be possessed, but they cannot be enjoyed, without an ardent desire that all may possess and enjoy the same."

Mr Nesbit's health had for a considerable time been impaired, and, before he should leave his native country, it was deemed advisable that he should have a season of rest. This indisposition served to renew the hope of his relatives that he would seek a sphere of exertion at home; and, during the period of four months that he spent in their society, he was still subjected to those appeals to his feelings which had tried him so much before. His attachment to his mother, as has been mentioned, was very deep. "My good, sweet, tender-hearted, kind, and prudent mother" is one of many expressions in his diary, that reveal the warmth of his regard. That a mother so loving and so loved; a mother so deserving of love, should thus stedfastly oppose his settled purpose to serve God in the mission-field, was deeply painful for many reasons; and not least for this, that it revealed a lower measure of faith and devotedness than he had believed to exist in his parent's heart.

Under the parental roof—his old home on the banks of the Tweed, Sunnyside—Mr Nesbit steadily recruited in health. He finally bade his relatives adieu—to most of them a last adieu—in the commencement of May 1827. He then writes to his father :—

"*Edinburgh*, 8*th May* 1827.—DEAR FATHER,—What shall I say of our parting, but that I trust it will be blessed both to your soul and to mine! . . . . . May God strengthen you with all strength in your soul! May He especially support my dear mother. There is one who is better to her than seven sons. If she had lost me, she cannot lose Him. But she has not lost me; if I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot be lost either to her, or to my country, or to the church of God. She used to give me up cheerfully into the hands and service of men; she used to commit me with confidence to their protection, and care, and kindness; she believed that they would give me the food and the money they promised; why should not she give me up as cheerfully into the service of Him who is God as well as man; why should she not commit me with as great confidence to his protection, and care, and kindness; why should not she believe as firmly that *He* will afford me my promised nourishment, and give me my promised reward? There are more than one among the members of our beloved family, who present the pleasing tokens of spiritual life. God grant that all of you may soon present them in abundance. One bud will shew that a tree is not dead to one who carefully looks for it and examines it; but every passing traveller perceives the life of a tree that is covered with blossoms or hanging with fruit. It should be the concern of each of us to present so many and decided tokens of life that they cannot be mistaken. Remember me most affectionately to my mother, and my brothers, and sisters, and aunt. Say continually, 'Lord, increase our faith.'"

Again:

"For my own part I can testify to the goodness of the Lord. I know not when I was ever so happy, for so many

days together, as I have been since I came to Edinburgh. My Master gives me more than grace; he gives me joy. Of my temporal concerns also, I feel no inclination to complain. My health is pretty good as usual. . . . . Tell —— to keep near to God, and that will put everything right. He will despair every hour, unless he think of a risen and exalted Saviour who has received gifts, and whose glory and delight it is to bestow them. Tell him to expect to feel extreme backwardness to every duty; but let him know at the same time, that he will never repent its performance."

In another letter, he says :—

"I had a very agreeable meeting with the Directors [of the Scottish Missionary Society] on the day immediately preceding that of my departure from Edinburgh. Dr Dickson gave the usual address, and the affectionate Mr Henderson recommended me to the grace of God by prayer. Our farewell was not without tears, and it was not without pleasure."

He had a tedious and stormy passage to London in a sailing vessel. He took up his abode under the hospitable roof of the late well-known and highly esteemed Mr Nisbet of Berners Street,—no relative, but to him, as to all missionaries, a friend indefatigably kind. He writes on his arrival :—

"21 *Berners Street, London, 21st May* 1827.—My Dear Mother,— . . . . We did not arrive at our place of destination till Saturday evening. We had the wind directly against us all the way. Except on Friday and Saturday, I lay for the most part in bed, and endeavoured to employ myself as busily and profitably as possible. You know that a Christian may never be idle. If he cannot write, let him read; if he cannot read, let him think; if he cannot think,

let him desire to think. If he cannot 'sing psalms,' 'let him pray;' if he cannot pray, let him meditate; if he can neither meditate, nor pray, nor sing, let him mingle sighs, and groans, and aspirations all together, and let him present them to the Father, who 'knoweth his frame,' *through* the Son, who hath experienced our weakness and temptations, *by* the Holy Spirit, who 'helpeth our infirmities.' On Friday morning I found that, in this way, I not only could be most profitably, but most agreeably engaged. If, then, the Lord be pleased to send storms upon us on our way to India, I trust I shall be enabled to go from my writing-desk to my bed, just as I should from one scene of engagement to another. The Lord will make good to me all that he has promised. Even when He hides his face from me, He is giving me a portion of the 'hundred fold;' for by so doing, He communicates the graces of patience and humility.

"Remember me most kindly to all the family of Bowsdon, and to my two aunts. Tell them I have but one request to make of them, that they will "take heed to themselves," and pray for me. The Lord give faith where it is wanting, and strengthen it where it is already to be found. In particular, may He strengthen you, my dear mother."

Contrary winds detained the vessel from sailing for India on the appointed day. Mr Nesbit writes from Portsmouth:—

"29*th May*.—The 'Katherine' came round on Sabbath evening with a very unfavourable wind. The wind is still unsteady, and, as long as it is so, she must remain off Portsmouth. I got all my heavy luggage on board yesterday, my cabin furnished, and nearly everything arranged. My berth is said to be the best in the ship. It has a bed, washhand-stand, table, book-shelves, chair, &c., of the most convenient description. I preached thrice on Sabbath, and

once at Portsmouth, in Mr Griffin's chapel. I confess I preach so often from a very selfish motive. There is a good number of praying people here, and I am anxious to be known and remembered by them, that I may have the benefit of their prayers. It was with this view that I attended and spoke at a missionary meeting last night. I mean to attend a meeting of a similar description to-night. I do not recollect of preaching thrice with so much ease at any time as I did on Sabbath. I was favoured with extraordinary vigour of body, and felt very little fatigue afterwards."

Mr Nesbit sailed from Portsmouth, in the "Katherine Stuart Forbes," on the 4th of June. The voyage to India was not tedious; it occupied three months and a half, and although stormy at first, yet on the whole it was prosperous and pleasant.

While on board ship, he kept a journal, in which there are some interesting entries. We must content ourselves with selecting the following:—

"*June* 4.—We sailed from Portsmouth early in the morning. I suffered very little from sickness during the day. This was an unexpected mercy. The Lord grant that it may be received with gratitude, and improved with cheerfulness. It would be very desirable to have divine worship established among the passengers in the public cabin, and maintained every morning and evening. As yet, there has been no public recognition of God among us. I have thought also of instructing and praying with the sailors; but have not yet spoken to the captain on the subject.

"*June* 6.—I embraced an opportunity of proposing to the captain that the mercy of God should be publicly

acknowledged, and His blessing implored, when we sat down to our meals. I spoke also of having Divine worship set up and maintained in the public cabin, and asked his permission to instruct and pray with the sailors. To none of these proposals had he any objection. 'He held his own opinions, and for that very reason was willing to respect the opinions of others.'

"*June* 3.—I enjoyed the pleasure of social worship in Mr ——'s cabin, both in the morning and evening. Our party consists of four. In this manner we intend to unite together in the worship of our common Lord, whenever the weather permits.

"*June* 9.—I spoke to Mr ——, the English clergyman on board, about public worship on the Sabbath. We agreed that he should read the prayers of the Church of England, and I should preach a sermon. I now thanked God that all the arrangements I was desirous of making had been completed.

"After this, I had a long conversation with one of the young gentlemen in the ship who are going out to India as cadets. We talked of the amusements of the theatre and of the card party. He would have them to be innocent. I told him that no pleasures were innocent that were sought and enjoyed without a view to the Divine will or the Divine glory. To him this was a doctrine altogether new and strange. I put into his hands Miss Kennedy's work entitled 'Profession is not Principle.'

"I had a conversation with another young gentleman. I have much reason to be thankful that an opportunity was afforded me to speak to these two young men as I did. They said that I had made them melancholy; but I was glad that I had spoken to them so freely, and had made some impression on their minds by so doing. What sur-

prises me exceedingly is this, that they do not treat my person and language, and conversation, and office, with contempt and ridicule. How much better are the servants treated than the Master!"

"*Sabbath, 10th June.*—This morning I had the mortification to learn from the captain that our arrangements with respect to Divine worship every morning and evening in the public cabin, were not to be carried into effect. I was permitted, however, to preach to the passengers and sailors in the forenoon, and to give instruction to a small party of the latter in the afternoon. Having thus obtained liberty to communicate instruction, my next anxiety was to collect a few who were willing to receive it. With great difficulty I at last found myself surrounded by five individuals who were willing to give me a hearing."

The vessel touched at Madeira. From that place he thus writes to his brother :—

"The passengers have been residing for two days in Funchal, the principal town of this island; but we are all ordered on board to-day. I have just returned to the ship. I visited a convent, and had some conversation with two of the friars. To one of them I pointed out, in his Portuguese Bible, the words of Paul respecting the Roman Catholic apostasy. He smiled, and said he did not believe what he professed. He wished to get clear of his gown; but for this purpose a sum of money was necessary to pacify the Government, which he did not possess. I said that, although he did not believe in the Roman Catholic religion, I trusted he believed in the Bible. He laughed, and said, 'O yes!'

". . . . . I am glad indeed that we shall be out at sea to-morrow (Sabbath). Idleness and intemperance make the sailors, at this time, more than usually violent in the expression of their wickedness. They have wine very cheap while

they remain at Madeira, and they drink of it with great profusion; for, though they are not allowed to go on shore, it is brought to them in boats, and the captain does not forbid them to buy it. Two of them have just been fighting, and one of them is laid in irons. Surely God is a long-suffering and gracious God. So many oaths are sworn that one would think His patience would be wearied, and His anger could no longer be restrained.

"*Aug.* 1.—It is indeed a shame for a Christian to be unhappy. The fountain of enjoyment is open to him, and he may go to it if he pleases. If, from fatigue or hunger, or any other natural cause, a Christian is uneasy and irritable, disinclined to deny himself and oblige his neighbour, discomposed for meditation and averse to prayer, he will be ashamed of his state and will endeavour to conceal it. Our Saviour, along with our nature, took all its sinless infirmities; yet, when He was oppressed with fatigue and pinched with hunger His usual self-denial was still conspicuous; 'He pleased not Himself, but others for their good;' He discovered no impatience; His serenity of mind was not interrupted; His meditations were not broken; His prayers were not disordered; not a thought was deranged. The same Almighty Spirit which thus supported His humanity when labouring under infirmities and oppressed with temptations, is offered to support ours; and if such support to us is unknown, it is because we have not asked that we might receive it, nor sought that we might find it.

"*Aug.* 10.—Finished the work of committing the Psalms to memory; having begun it about a year ago, and proceeded with it as I had opportunity.

"*Aug.* 12, *Sabbath.*—On reviewing the events of this day, altogether I spent a very happy day; if my memory does not fail me, I may say, indeed, that for a long period

the Sabbath has uniformly proved to me the happiest of the week."

Mr Nesbit mentions the following as among the books he read during the voyage :—Irving's Dialogues on Prophecy, Wilberforce's Practical Christianity, The Pilgrim's Progress, and the Life of Wesley, evidently not Southey's, but apparently Richard Watson's. It is rather singular that he mentions no book having a reference to India. We have a long critique on Wesley's doctrines. Mr Nesbit being at this time what he remained through life, a decided, though not extreme Calvinist, Arminianism finds no favour. Yet it is interesting to see that of the personal character of Wesley, he speaks with much admiration.

On finishing Irving's Dialogues on Prophecy, he thus writes on a theme of solemn interest :

"*June* 15.—I occupied the day in reading Irving's Dialogues on Prophecy. Whether his opinions with respect to the Second Advent be correct or not, one thing is certain—that the views and feelings of Christians in general on this subject are very faulty and deficient. Ought not we to have as great a desire and expectation of the coming of Christ as the Apostles had ? Nay, ought not our desire and expectation to be greater than theirs ? If John inculcated on his 'little children' the love of the Father and not of the world, by the argument that the time in which they lived was 'the last time,' and if Paul enforced the same on his 'brethren' by the argument that that 'time was short,' surely it becomes us to press home upon our brethren, our children, and ourselves, the same important lesson, now that the argument, by the lapse of many centuries, has become much stronger. But how few love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ! How few wait for Him from heaven !"

"*Aug.* 18.—Finished the Life of Wesley. I have derived

much instruction and encouragement from the account of Wesley's personal experience and ministerial labours. The biographer defends the subject of his narrative at all hazards; and in theology he seems to have followed him through all his changes. We speak of Wesley's changes and inconsistencies with respect to opinion; for with respect to that which is of infinitely higher importance, perhaps no man was ever more steady or consistent; from the period of his ordination to the moment of his death, his desire, anxiety, and labour was one—to know and to do the Divine will and promote the Divine glory."

There is in his journals, at this period, hardly the slightest reference to natural phenomena. The wonders of the deep, the glories of sunrise and sunset on the shoreless ocean, the constellations unknown to northern skies (the brilliant "Cross" among them) that successively unfolded their calm magnificence, would, at a later period of his life, have been studied with more than admiration—with a deep and sacred joy. But we have no evidence that at this date they made any impression on his mind: there is no allusion to them in his papers. The way in which he was gradually led to delight in outward nature was as unlike as possible to that which Wordsworth describes when he speaks of "the tall rock" haunting him "like a passion"—of the objects of nature being *in themselves*

> "An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye."

There are minds that travel from the circumference to the centre, each form of beauty pointing to a beauty above itself, till the soul reach at length "the first good, first perfect, and first fair." Many, on the other hand, move from the

centre to the circumference; they first find God, and being able to rejoice in Him, learn to survey His works with admiration and delight *as His*. And then, by degrees, a new sense of beauty dawns within the soul.

> "*Thine eye shall be instructed*, and thy heart
> Made pure, shall relish with Divine delight
> Till then unfelt, what hands Divine have wrought.

The latter description applies to the subject of this memoir. His perception of the beautiful, originally slight, went on enlarging and enlarging, in proportion as his spirit grew in the knowledge and love of God.

There are one or two entries in his journal which shew him to have possessed but little of what is called "knowledge of the world." He seems like one who has just emerged from a cloister, and who, as he beholds the broad stream of human life that is hurrying past, is somewhat prone to censure what he does not comprehend. But there ever is a "simplicity and godly sincerity,"—an earnest desire to serve God and lead sinners to the Saviour, that is truly beautiful and attractive.

Some of his later entries run thus,—

"*Sept.* 8.—When I visited this morning one of the crew who was very ill, he told me that he had been thinking of what I had said the last time I was with him. I again reminded him of the power and kindness of the Saviour. I endeavoured to endear them to him, and to embolden him to ask their exercise in his behalf, by telling him that He who possessed them had a nature like his own, that when on earth He had suffered more in that nature than had ever fallen or could fall to his lot; that though now exalted on high, He still sympathised with his people below, and, as it were, wept over every bodily pain and mental distress they

endured; that, while He wept over them, He nevertheless appointed and sent them, because they were absolutely necessary to purify them as He is pure, and to make them meet for the happiness and glory that He enjoys.

"*Sept.* 13.—I was delighted to hear —— say with much feeling that he would not soon forget the things that I had told him. 'Soon forget? You will *never* forget them,' I replied, 'if the Holy Spirit has impressed them on your heart.' If it should afterwards appear that, in His infinite grace, He has done so, how shall I rejoice! If God but 'give me one of them that sail with me,' how ample is my reward!"

"*Sept.* 16, *Sabbath.*—I was exceedingly happy in having an opportunity of speaking for the last time to all the passengers and sailors on board. I gave a discourse on the Lord's prayer. Two of the gentlemen disputed against my statements at dinner; and one of them told me that I was quite illiberal and uncharitable. I had the satisfaction of reflecting that I had announced the truth of God; I rejoiced to perceive that it had made a deeper impression than usual; and I cherished the hope, that an arrow from the Almighty's quiver might have pierced the heart of some, and occasioned a wound that would continue to rankle until they came to God himself, to extract the arrow and heal the wound.

"I had a good audience in the forecastle in the afternoon. They were evidently touched by the reflection that I was speaking to them for the last time.

"*Sept.* 19.—Land was seen in the morning; and about noon, a pilot from Bombay came on board our ship. I went on shore in the pilot-boat to apprize —— of his wife's arrival. I was happy to learn from Mr Clow* that all my brethren in the mission were quite well. I thanked God that he had

* The Rev. James Clow, Senior Minister of the Scotch Church in Bombay.

brought me so speedily across the ocean, and had set me down in India in better health than that with which I left the shores of Britain. I asked Him for temperance and chastity, zeal and activity, patience and perseverance, humility and meekness, in the midst of the arduous duties to which I was called."

Writing to his mother from Bombay, on the 28th of September, he says :—

"I cannot say that I was privileged with many seasons of joy; but I possessed uninterrupted comfort and peace, and numerous and surprising were the revelations that God gave me, both with respect to His character and my own. If I have already received a part of the 'hundred-fold' that is promised me, I have received it particularly in respect of 'knowledge and understanding.' I pray 'the God of *all* grace' to replenish me with the other gifts and graces of the Spirit. . . . In regard to natural events, God has hitherto disappointed all my fears. I went on board the 'Katherine Stuart Forbes' expecting the worst. I looked up to God, my Father, and asked Him with a sigh to be merciful unto m,e yet to do with me according to His pleasure, and not to spare me if I required severe correction. He did not once lift up the rod in the way I had contemplated. I dreaded the heat of India, and landed on its shores, and entered into its habitations, with little confidence or comfort, except that which had the word of God for its foundation and support. But from that day my health has improved."

Thus, then, our young missionary has been brought in safety to the great Heathen land. What are his feelings as he prepares to enter on his labours? Of enthusiasm or ardour, Robert Nesbit constitutionally has not much. On those aspects of the missionary work which appeal merely to

the sense of beauty or of grandeur that can exist in "the natural man" who "discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God," he seldom or never dwells. Of what has been called "the romance of missions," or of a spirit of adventure, or of a delight in seeing new climes, new men, new manners, —he has absolutely nothing. Naturally timid and home-loving, he was the last man in the world to choose this life in foreign lands. He had thus described himself before leaving Britain:—

"Mine is a resolution neither prompted by feeling, nor supported by a feeling, but by a cool consideration of the duty and privilege of Christian devotedness. My feelings may be warm, or they may be cold; but my judgment remains the same, and so does my resolution. . . . . My only fear is that my extreme timidity may lead me to shrink from danger and difficulties, when it is proper and necessary that I should meet them boldly. I thank God, however, that I now possess a degree of courage to which I was formerly a perfect stranger. I trust that in all dangers I shall be able to say, 'Behold, I am in thy hands, oh Lord; do with me as seemeth thee good.' . . . . It is no concern of mine how much or how little good I may accomplish. It is no concern of mine whether I enjoy health or be afflicted with sickness; whether I have a short passage to heaven or a long one. The missionary's concern is to do the will of Him that sends him, and to finish His work."

It is, then, a deep and overmastering sense of obligation that has brought Robert Nesbit to the heathen field. God has spoken; and he must obey. He plants his foot on the shores of India with the feeling: "Here I hope to live, and here, if the Lord will, to die." As he looks around him in India, his conviction of duty strengthens; for now "his eye affects his heart." Viewing the dark idolatries and deep

debasement of the heathen, he shares in the feeling of Elijah, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts"; and, like his blessed Master, he is "moved with compassion on the multitudes, because they faint, and are scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd."

CHAPTER III.

COMMENCEMENT OF MISSIONS IN WESTERN INDIA—STATE OF THE MARATHÁ COUNTRY—THE SCOTTISH MISSION.

Before we commence a review of Robert Nesbit's Indian career, it may be well to pause for a moment and glance at the field on which he now entered as an able and zealous labourer.

Missions were commenced in Western India about fifty years later than in Bengal, and a full century later than in Madras.

In 1807, Dr John Taylor arrived in Bombay, as an agent of the London Missionary Society. He was appointed to labour at Surat; but that station he never reached. He speedily became discouraged, and, abandoning his missionary work, accepted secular employment under Government.

Some striking notices will be found in Henry Martyn's journals of the state in which he found Bombay in 1811, as he passed through it on his way to Persia. The religious character of the European community was fearfully low. To persevere in direct missionary efforts in the midst of such a society, would have required far more devotedness than Dr Taylor seems to have possessed. He still, however, continued to do something in the translation of the Scriptures.

The next attempt was from America. In February 1812 the Rev. Messrs Judson, Newell, Hall, Nott, and Rice, sailed for Calcutta, as missionaries of the American Board, the exact scene of their future labours in the East not being fixed. On their arrival in India, the whole party were informed by the Government that they must return in the ship which had brought them out; but, with some difficulty, a mitigation of the sentence was obtained, by which they were permitted to proceed to the Isle of France, a place beyond the jurisdiction of the East India Company. Thither, accordingly, Mr Newell and his wife proceeded. Messrs Judson and Rice having adopted Baptist views, it was thought desirable that they should seek a different sphere of labour from their brethren; and they prepared to proceed to Burmah. Messrs Hall and Nott were about to follow Mr Newell to the Isle of France, when circumstances led them to believe they might be allowed to settle in the western part of India. They accordingly took their passage in a ship bound for Bombay, and proceeded thither without having received the permission of Government. But a message from the Supreme Government anticipated their arrival in Bombay; and the Governor, Sir Evan Nepean, though personally friendly, at once warned them that his orders were explicit, and that they must forthwith leave the country. They sent in one memorial after another, all of them calm, judicious, and weighty documents,—but to no purpose; and after intelligence had arrived of the commencement of hostilities between Britain and America, their case looked more hopeless than ever. They now sailed, without permission of the authorities, for Cochin; intending to proceed to Ceylon, and there labour beyond the reach of the Indian Government. But a cruiser was despatched in all haste after them, and they were forcibly brought back to Bombay.

Lord Minto's term of office as Governor-General had now expired; and he had been succeeded by Lord Moira, afterwards Marquis of Hastings, who pursued from the first a more Christian policy than his predecessor. The missionaries learned from their friends in Calcutta that his Lordship had no objection to their remaining in India; but as Sir Evan Nepean had received no fresh instructions from the Supreme Government, he considered himself still bound to send them on to England. It was accordingly ruled that they must leave India by the earliest opportunity. This happened to be the expected departure of a vessel in two days.

The missionaries, in much distress, resolved on a final effort. They presented a most earnest appeal to Sir Evan, addressing him in his private capacity and as a Christian man, and beseeching him by the solemn realities of a judgment-day, not to drive from the shores of India those who had come in obedience to their Lord to preach salvation to the perishing heathen. Then, leaving the case with God, they prepared to quit the country. The matter looked hopeless. Their baggage was packed up and ready, the boats were waiting at the pier to convey it and themselves on shipboard, the porters had come to carry their things from the house, —when, to their unutterable relief, a message arrived from the Governor, granting them permission, in the mean time, to remain. Sir Evan had been deeply affected by the faithful and solemn representations of their letter, and had submitted it to the Council; and it had been agreed that it would be well to pause and refer the question to Calcutta.

The Supreme Government, now not unwilling to tolerate the missionaries, but greatly afraid of the home authorities, referred the whole matter, and the correspondence connected with it, to the Court of Directors. The Court were on the point of sending a Despatch to India, conveying a severe

rebuke to all their servants, civil and ecclesiastical, who had in any way abetted the proceedings of the missionaries, and insisting on the instant expulsion of the latter from the country. At this critical moment, Mr Charles Grant, so well known for his indefatigable and successful efforts on behalf of Indian evangelization, stept forward. He drew up a statement of the whole case, which so far satisfied the Court, that they allowed the Government of Bombay to deal with the question as they thought best. On this, the kind-hearted and really pious Sir Evan at once gave the missionaries liberty to remain, and expressed his hearty desire for the success of their evangelistic efforts. At the termination of this long and wasting conflict with despotic power, they began their labours with hearts overflowing with thankfulness and joy in 1814-15.

Such, then, was the memorable commencement of Protestant missions in Western India. As given with all its details in the Reports of the American Board, or more briefly in the Life of the excellent Gordon Hall, the story reads like a romance; and again and again we pause and ask if such things were. Let us thank God that such things can no longer be.

Mr Newell ere long joined his companions in Bombay; but his young wife, the devoted Harriet Newell, he had buried in the Isle of France. We can hardly then reckon her among the pioneers of our Bombay Missions; yet let us not forget that her thrilling story has won more hearts both in America and Britain to the cause she held so dear, than any other missionary biography, unless we except perhaps that of Henry Martyn. Her husband, though his spirits never fully rallied after his crushing sorrows, was yet able to labour for several years in Bombay.

We have deemed it right to dwell thus somewhat fully on

the painfully interesting commencement of missions in Western India; but their subsequent progress we must sketch with a much more rapid pen.

In August 1815, the Rev. Messrs William Fyvie and James Skinner arrived in Bombay as Agents of the London Missionary Society. They founded a mission in the city of Surat.

In 1817, two Wesleyan missionaries, the Rev. Messrs Horner and Fletcher, established a mission in Bombay. After labouring about five years both returned to England, completely shattered in health and depressed in spirits. The Wesleyan Mission was never resumed.

In 1820, the Rev. R. Kenney came out as an agent of the Church Missionary Society, and founded the first Mission of the Church of England in Western India.

In the same year the Rev. Joseph Taylor founded a station in connection with the London Missionary Society in Belgaum, about 300 miles south of Bombay.

The Scottish Missionary Society, which had been instituted in 1796, turned its attention to the great continent of India about 1822. In the Report of that year we have a brief statement of the reasons that led them to select Western India as the field of their Eastern Mission. "The Presidency of Bombay," it is said, "which, from recent annexations, now includes a very extensive and populous territory, possesses at present only six missionaries; while in the Bengal and Madras Presidencies there are upwards of eighty." They also mention its contiguity to Persia as an important fact, especially to a Society that hoped to send missionaries to that country. Their first missionary was the Rev. Donald Mitchell.* He reached Bombay in January 1823; but died

* Mr Mitchell, the son of a Scottish minister, was engaged in study with a view to the office of the holy ministry, when, having adopted senti-

in eight months. He was followed in about seven months by the Rev. Messrs John Cooper, James Mitchell, and Alexander Crawford, the Rev. John Stevenson joining them a few months later. They were all married men.

The very feeble band of labourers in the Western Presidency thus received an accession, insignificant in itself, yet relatively important: the six were made ten. Let us note some of the special characteristics of the people among whom they laboured, that we may the better understand their work, and sympathise both in their sorrows and their joys.

Every mission field has its peculiarities, which the wise missionary will carefully ponder. While the melancholy description, "the heathen who know not God," is of universal application, and the sole healing balm for the wounds of the nations is the gospel of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, yet the precise modes of missionary action must be affected by the past history, and the present position, and the condition, intellectual, moral, social, and political, of the people who are addressed. Alike in essentials, yet in important circumstantials how exceedingly unlike, are the Brahman Vedantist and the cannibal of Feejee. Like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who did not present the one unchanging truth in one unchanging form at Athens and

ments opposed to the Confession of Faith, he obtained a cadetship in the East India Company's service. His views developed themselves into Socinianism; but at Surat, under the teaching of the missionaries, his heart became deeply impressed with the truth. Lieut. Mitchell on this resigned his appointment, to devote himself to missionary work, and, if possible, in India. He completed his theological studies, and offered his services to the Scottish Missionary Society, which were gladly accepted. Seemingly he was the first to direct their attention prominently to India.

Mr Mitchell had a brother born blind, and deaf, and dumb, whose case, as detailed by Dugald Stewart in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, has attracted no small notice. At this date (Jan. 1858) this brother still lives in the town of Nairn.

at Jerusalem, the modern missionary must be "made all things unto all men, that he may by all means save some."

In sketching the leading characteristics of Western India, we need not refer to Sindh; for no mission was founded there till 1850. Nor need we speak of the province of Gujarát—a large and interesting region, with special characteristics of its own,—for the Scottish Mission never extended its labours thither, except in passing visits. But the Maráthá country—*Mahárâshtra*, the "great country," as the Brahmans delight to call it—claims a fuller notice. Regarding the Maráthá country as co-extensive with the language, we see, by a glance at the map, how large a portion of the continent of India is included under the designation. We trace its eastern limit from a point fifty miles north of Nagpore, in a waving line to the neighbourhood of Goa. Its northern boundary is for a great distance the Nerbudda river; its western limit the ocean.

The proper Marathas seem to have been a race of mountaineers, partly pastoral, partly agricultural,—bold and warlike, and as generally is the case in the East, ready to exchange the life of shepherds for that of robbers. Their early history is obscure. They first come forward to act a conspicuous part about two hundred years ago. Under their great leader Shivají (Sevajee), they rose in revolt against the Mohammadan Empire of Delhi, and for nearly two centuries they met with no effectual check. In the battle-field the sturdy daring Maratha soldier was fully a match for the Moslem, and the proverbial astuteness of the Maratha Brahman encountered on no unequal terms the craft of Aurungzebe. The Maratha chiefs soon claimed to be the lords paramount of India; and their plundering horsemen swept over the whole continent from the Himalayas to Tanjore. Maratha thrones were planted far beyond the

bounds of Maharashtra proper,—as at Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, and southward down to Tanjore itself. Unsparing in their exactions, torturing the rich to make them disclose their suspected wealth, wasting with fire and sword wherever they were opposed, the Marathas were at best, what Sir Thomas Munro has styled them, "a horde of imperial robbers;" and often "the land was before them a garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness." Maharashtra was glutted with the spoil of India.

All this too was associated with religion. Shivaji was a fair specimen of the race. He was a religious man in the Oriental sense of the word. Cunning and ferocious as a tiger—exhibiting, at times, a diabolic treachery—he had yet consecrated his sword to Bhawání, the Destroyer, and called it by her name; he erected temples to the gods, and atoned for a host of crimes by lavish donations to the Brahmans. When he rose in revolt against the Moslem, it was almost a religious war he proclaimed; he unfurled a sacred banner, and summoned his countrymen to rally round it for "the protection of Brahmans and cows." The Brahmans soon became the leaders in the confederacy; and the Peshwá of Poona dealt with the descendants of Shivaji, the Rájás of Satárá, as the mayors of the palace had done with the early kings of France. Every thing now came to be modelled according to the Shastras; and the Brahman revelled in a world at last moving to his mind. The immeasurable superiority of the "earth-god" above all other castes was universally confessed; he and his fellow-cattle (the cows) were reinstated in their divine honours; the lower castes were unworthy to be the dust of their feet.

The power of the Marathas had been humbled in 1803, at the great battle of Assaye; and in 1818, the Peshwá Bájiráo, the head of the confederation, was overthrown near

Poona, and deprived of his dominions. He retired to Bithoor near Cawnpore, on a lavish pension, to spend the long remainder of his life in disgusting orgies and childish superstition, and in fomenting dissatisfaction with the British sway, among the numerous Maratha Brahmans that visit, or permanently reside in, the holy Gangetic cities.*

There was, then, over the whole of Maharashtra, and especially in Poona and its neighbourhood, an intense feeling of dislike to the victorious Europeans. With the Brahmans this was a matter of course; since, while supreme in all things civil as well as religious, they had suddenly been hurled from their pride of place. But the feeling was also strong in the other classes. They too resented the injury done to their religion; but waiving that, the greatest of the Maratha chiefs—men who styled themselves Rajas and Maharajas, and ruled over millions—had sprung from the common people,—Sindia had been a cultivator and Holkar a shepherd. Each stirring spirit, then, could aspire to like honours; and although, among the quarrels of the leaders, portions of Maharashtra itself had been ruthlessly laid waste, yet this was hardly thought of; and at all events, come what might, every warrior could trust to his own right arm that he had a fairer chance of spoiling than of being spoiled. And thus it was that the fierce spirit of the whole Maratha race, curbed not broken, champed the bit, and fretted with ill-dissembled impatience under the British rein.

Such, then, had been the history—such were the feelings, of the people among whom the Scottish missionaries came to proclaim the message of peace—that gospel which declares that all men (whether high-castes or out-castes) are

* Náná Sáheb, who has acquired so fearful a celebrity in the late massacres, is the adopted son of the Ex-Peshwa. He is a Brahman, born in a village of the Konkan, not far from Bombay.

sinners, and that all are brethren. In the Divine election of particular nations to receive the blessings of grace, there is much that baffles human wisdom; yet surely this people was not likely to be among the first of Indian races to be chosen,—it seems more in accordance with the Divine plan to send redemption *first* to the oppressed, and next to the oppressor. Again, when a people has been "prepared for the Lord," there has generally been a series of providential events which even man's wisdom recognises as fitted to break up the soil and make it ready for the seed. When the Karens of Burmah had been groaning under oppression for generations, the strangers from the west appeared, at once to reinstate them in their rights as men, and to teach them a new religion. It is hardly possible to conceive a case more opposite to theirs than was that of the proud, predatory, fanatical Marathas, when a foreign power had struck them down, and foreign teachers offered to instruct them in the gospel.

When the Scottish missionaries arrived in India, two missions, the American and the English, existed in Bombay. The original intention had been to plant the Scottish mission in Poona, the city next in importance to Bombay, and more the *heart* of the Maratha country than Bombay itself. This, however, the Government would not permit; they were "desperately afraid of offending the Brahmans,"—* and, indeed, a tract distributor of the American Mission had, shortly before, been seized in Poona by the British authorities, and hurried off under an escort below the Ghauts. The Dakhan (Deccan) then being closed, and Bombay preoccupied, the mission chose the Konkan. This is a strip of low country between the Ghauts and the sea, varying in

* This was the exact phrase used by a high Government official, even a good many years later.

breadth from twenty to fifty miles; rough and hilly, with bad roads, and in those days no roads at all; with few large towns; the population generally sparse, and scattered in villages and hamlets; the Brahmanical proportion large and influential; the rest of the community more degraded than the corresponding classes in the Deccan. One melancholy proof of the peculiar strength of Hindu superstition in the Southern Konkan is, that this was the only province of the Bombay Presidency in which the revolting practice of Suttee was frequent.* These were formidable aggravations of their difficulties, but as one of the surviving missionaries now writes †—"Our settling in the Konkan was from necessity, not choice."

In 1823 it was still indeed the day of small things. The Church of England missionary had laboured for three years, and the Americans for eight or nine, faithfully and wisely; but there were no converts. *Caste* remained omnipotent. "I well remember," says Mr Cooper, "the sensation produced some time afterwards when the first Hindu professed his faith in Christ. Some weeks after his baptism, the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed. Many natives were present. Mr Hall was about to distribute the elements, when the professed convert suddenly rose up, and exclaiming, 'No, I will not break caste yet,' rushed out of the chapel.'

* The average was twenty-eight and a half annually in the Southern Konkan, and eleven for the rest of the Bombay territories. In the Parliamentary printed papers a very startling fact comes out in connection with this subject:—"When the Southern Konkan came into our possession, the inhabitants voluntarily discontinued the practice of Suttee, in consequence of understanding that it was repugnant to the British laws; and only resumed it on finding it was tolerated by the British Government."—Quoted in the Report of the Scottish Missionary Society for 1831, p. 22. Suttee was abolished by the Bombay Government in 1830.

† The Rev. John Cooper, now minister of the United Presbyterian Church at Fala.

By this time the policy of the Bombay authorities towards missions had considerably changed. Though they had forbidden the Scottish mission to settle in the Deccan, they threw no obstacle in the way when they proceeded to the Konkan. The Governor in Council made the mission a present of books,—a gift small in itself, but betokening a new and better feeling on the part of the authorities. The Governor was the Honorable Mountstuart Elphinstone, one of the very greatest of the many great names connected with India. Personally he was very friendly, and annually subscribed Rs.400 (£40) to the mission funds. One of the members of Council became president of the Auxiliary Missionary Association. Nor did this better condition of things cease with Mr Elphinstone. Sir John Malcolm, his worthy successor, was equally favourable to the mission, and subscribed liberally in support of its operations. Such facts seem to deserve notice, in justice to the Bombay Government, and also because they refute opinions entertained in our day by some men of high rank and influence. We may especially refer to Lord Ellenborough's recent assertion in Parliament, as to the disastrous consequences of subscriptions being paid to Missionary Societies by Government officials. We are aware of his Lordship's great abilities; but his opinion in regard to Native views and feelings is light as air when weighed against the judgment of such men as Elphinstone and Malcolm, whose lives had been spent in the East, and who were familiar with every aspect of Native society.

The Scottish Missionaries regarded the oral proclamation of the gospel as their chief work. Having diligently acquired a knowledge of the Native language, they preached "in the house and by the wayside, in the market-place and the temple, and during extended tours taken for the ex

press purpose." Some of their itineracies extended over a hundred miles from their own station. Portions of Scripture and Christian tracts were largely circulated on such tours, among all the reading population. When the missionaries reached any large town, they generally remained in it some days, or, if possible, some weeks. Crowds often came to hear them. In a country wrapped in gross darkness, the natural wish of the evangelist is still to press on and on, that he may "preach the gospel in the regions beyond"; yet it is necessary to revisit scenes of former preaching, in order to revive interest, and to correct and extend the knowledge of the gospel. How, with a small staff of workmen, could these conflicting duties be fulfilled? The missionaries felt the difficulty, and endeavoured not to sacrifice the one claim to the other.

Christian education was another great object of the mission. There were then no Government schools. There were Native schools in most of the large villages. These taught not reading, but writing. Qualification for the transaction of business was the end in view, mental improvement not being thought of. The character used in matters of business was quite distinct from that used in books; and except some Brahman boys, few cared to learn the latter. Arithmetic was also taught, and sometimes taught well. History and geography were unknown. When a book was read (all books were in manuscript), it was probably a lascivious tale about Krishna, or some other vile object of Hindu worship. Classes there were none; or rather, each pupil was a class by himself. All simultaneously shouted their lessons at the top of their voice. Female education was not heard of. Finally, the wretched schoolmaster was wretchedly paid, and was generally making desperate efforts to find other employment. The profession was, for the most part, recruited from the

disabled members of society. There were a few Musalman schools up and down the country. The boys in them were taught the Hindustáni character; and when they were able to read a word or two of Arabic, without understanding a syllable, their education was thought complete.

In such a state of things, education naturally appeared to the missionaries a work unspeakably important. To multiply schools; to banish from these all heathen books; to introduce Christian books; to catechize and exhort multitudes of youth on the grand truths of religion, as freely as in Britain,—all this was delightfully encouraging; and the Scottish Mission (like the American and English) threw itself, heart and soul, into the work. On all sides applications poured in for schools, and more schools. Eighty were set up by 1827, containing above 3000 pupils; and the eighty might have been multiplied to hundreds. All castes, from the Brahman downwards, attended.

Among the pupils there were more than 300 girls. Female education had, from the outset, appeared to the mission an essential part of their work. They had mentioned this to influential parties in Bombay immediately on their arrival; but had been told the thing was hopeless. Nevertheless they persevered, nor without success.* In this important work the wives of the missionaries took an active part.

The Scottish Missionaries ere long began to perceive that they had over-estimated the good these schools were likely to effect. The boys left school very early; the girls still earlier. Heathen teachers were employed, because no others were procurable; and these were often far from trust-worthy.

* A letter to the Directors, dated 15th March 1824, thus refers to the subject: "A beginning has been made. There are several girls in the schools among the boys; and we are now erecting a schoolroom solely for the reception of girls." It was in March 1824 that female education commenced in the island of Bombay under the American Mission.

Without the closest superintendence on the part of the missionaries, the schools were of little use; but it was impossible for four men satisfactorily to inspect eighty of these scattered over a considerable extent of country, especially when they had other and still higher duties to discharge. Hence two of the missionaries,—despairing, after two or three years' experience, of doing much good by means of schools,—devoted themselves entirely to the oral proclamation of the gospel. The other Missionaries and the home Society still maintained that Christian education was an essential part of Mission work; but that schools ought not to be multiplied beyond the number that could be superintended with full efficiency.*

The missionaries had come provided with a lithographic press, and were able to print and circulate a large number of publications. They also took part in the composition of tracts.

While the Scottish Mission was thus diligent in the Southern Konkan, the American and English missions were equally so in the island of Bombay. Their modes of evangelistic action were similar to those of the Scottish Mission.

By this time some desire for the knowledge of English had begun to appear in the Native community in the city of Bombay. Mr Hall, of the American mission, wrote a grammar to facilitate its acquirement—a book which is useful even at this day. Mr Kenney, of the Church mission, taught English

* It was the considerable success attending mission schools that induced the Bombay Government to embark in native education, in which its efforts (would that they had not been sullied by most gratuitous concessions to heathen prejudices, especially in excluding the lowest castes) have been considerable in amount and success. Bombay long took the lead among the Indian Presidencies in the very important work of educating the masses through the vernacular dialects; but the system of "Village Vernacular Schools," established of late years by Thomason in the North-West, appears still more broad and comprehensive.

to a small class of young Hindus, at his own house. Out of Bombay there was no desire in Western India for the acquisition of English, and as yet the Scottish Mission took no part in communicating instruction through that important language. Such was the feeble commencement in Western India of the study of a language which Dr Duff, with his usual force, characterises as " a lever which is to move all Hindostan."

A most pleasing harmony existed among the different missions. In November 1825, " The Bombay Missionary Union" was formed; which comprised all the missions then labouring in Western India, the great object of the Union being " to promote Christian fellowship, and consult on the best means of advancing the kingdom of Christ among the heathen." The following extracts from a sermon preached by Mr Hall on the formation of the Union, will well explain the feeling of the missions generally, and the prospects of their work at the date we have just mentioned:—

" Has not the very office which in infinite condescension we are permitted to bear, procured us the contempt of the scorner? Nor have the Pagans been chief in this matter, but those by profession our *kindred* and our *blood*. *These* have been the first to call us babblers and mad fellows. . . . We have found, as we expected, all the pure and sublime doctrines of the gospel calculated to offend the pride of all classes of people to whom we are sent. . . . We have, as we trust, compassionately laboured for the salvation of the heathen. Sometimes they have heard us with attention and respect, but often have they rendered us evil for our good, and hatred for our love. . . . When we have walked about in the heat, and dust, and smoke, and filth of the heathen towns and villages, (*filth*, I say, for they need the gospel as well to cleanse their streets and houses as to

cleanse their *hearts*), inviting them to Christ—and, for doing so, the finger of scorn has pointed at us, and the tongue of scandal assailed us; instead of feeling ashamed have we gloried in it, accounting ourselves unworthy to suffer reproach for the name of Christ, or to serve Him in the meanest capacity? . . . .

"We have laboured for years. The gospel has sounded forth. Thousands have heard and read it. But ah! who has believed our report? And how have sickness and death, from time to time, cut down our slender ranks, and ravaged our little camp!"

Such, then, was the state of missions in the Bombay Presidency when Robert Nesbit arrived in September 1827.

There were in the Scottish Mission four labourers—the health of some threatening to give way; four (including a missionary printer) in the American Mission—all, or nearly all, in shattered health; in the Church of England Mission only one. These were the only messengers of peace in the Maratha country, with its eight or nine millions of inhabitants. To the north, in the province of Gujarát, containing a population of about seven millions, there were but two missionaries. Then over the whole of the immense tract that extends from Surat to the Himalayas, the eye sought in vain for a single missionary station. To the south, broken only by a very feeble mission at Belgaum, there stretched one dreary moral wilderness, full eight hundred miles, from Bombay to Travancore. North-east, the eye travelled across the broad continent from the Indian Ocean to the Ganges, and scarcely discerned a solitary light, faintly twinkling amid the night of ages that wrapped the whole land as with the shroud of death.

Note.—On the spelling of Eastern names see some remarks in the preface.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS—STUDY OF THE LANGUAGE—PREACHING—SCHOOLS—TRACTS.

Mr Nesbit's journals at this important period of his life were happily kept with tolerable regularity. We shall draw pretty largely on the record of his thoughts and employments during the first year or two of his missionary career. Even seeming trifles may have a value as enabling our European readers to form juster notions of Indian life, and evangelistic labours in the East. We do this, not forgetting the fact that first impressions in India require in many things to be corrected,—so much so, that the pointed remark of the sagacious Corrie has passed into a proverb: "It is a mercy if a missionary only do no harm the first year." Robert Nesbit, however, was not the man to form hasty judgments or rush into hasty schemes; and there is wonderfully little in his papers of this date, which ampler experience would have set aside as erroneous.

"*Bombay, Sept.* 24. 1827.—The Corresponding Committee of the Scottish Missionary Society met to-day.

"I am to go to one or other of the two stations already occupied by the missionaries. To this determination they were

led by the consideration that either at Bankote or Hurnee,* I should meet with fewer interruptions than in Bombay; that I should much sooner acquire the language, if placed under the direction of one of my brethren; that I should have an opportunity of seeing the whole system of their operations, particularly with respect to schools; and that I should soon be able to act the part of a superintendent, and thus relieve one of their number for the purpose of establishing a new station at Bombay.

"*Sept.* 26.—I went into the Fort with Mr Clow in the morning and breakfasted with the Governor.† I found him very affable and obliging. And having stated the object for which I had come to Bombay, and mentioned the part of the presidency in which I wished to settle, I readily obtained his concurrence, and was promised a passport.

"*Sept.* 27.—I spent two hours with Mr Graves, the American missionary, in conversation, reading, and prayer. . . . . We next spoke of our want of success as far as the conversion of the natives is concerned, and of the unreasonableness of the demand and threatening of many of our professed friends at home,—"Give us conversions, or else we forsake you." Are we in God's stead to "kill and to make alive," that they should require of us a spiritual creation, and ask us to show them a race of spiritual children? We tell them the truth. We have converted none, but we would use this as an argument for an increase of zeal and labour, self-denial and liberality, both on their part and our own.

"*Sept.* 29.—I attended the annual meeting of the Bible Society in Bombay. There were *nine* individuals present

* The Mission had two stations,—one at Bankote, a town on the coast about sixty miles south of Bombay,—the other at Hurnee, about fourteen miles farther south.

† The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone.

besides myself. In this country the man that gives a society his personal attendance, is counted to have made a much greater sacrifice than he who gives it his subscription."

Happily the attendance at the anniversaries of the religious societies has now for many years been much more encouraging than Mr Nesbit found it in 1827.

"*Oct.* 3.—In the morning intelligence was received of a large boat going down the coast. The master agreed to take me to Bankote, and promised to sail the following day.

"*Bankote, Oct.* 4.—I had my luggage sent away to the boat before breakfast, and followed myself soon after. I found myself among a number of Mohammadans,* who could not understand me, and who could not speak so that I could understand them. Part of them made themselves merry with my signs. . . . . Night came upon us before we had made half the distance between Bombay and Bankote. I lay down and slept very well till next day's dawn.

"*Oct.* 5.—The entrance to the Bankote river was visible in the morning. We did not, however, reach the village itself till about noon. Mr R., a gentleman residing at Bankote, welcomed me on shore. I was put into a palankeen, carried up a steep hill, and set down at the door of a room in which all the missionaries were assembled.

"Had I been an hour or two later, I should not have had the satisfaction of seeing them all. Two of them were on the point of departure to Hurnee; but my appearance was felt to be a proper and agreeable occasion of delay. We spent the remainder of the day together, and offered up our united thanksgivings to our gracious Lord in the evening."

When Mr Nesbit reached Bankote, the missionary body

* The boatmen in Bombay are generally Mahommedans.

were assembled to hold one of their stated quarterly meetings. These meetings were regularly held for prayer and conference, regarding their evangelistic work. Other Christian friends usually joined them on such occasions. These reunions were found very profitable.

The very next day sees him set to work :—

"*Oct.* 6.—I turned my attention to the Maratha alphabet. I spent a considerable part of the day in conversation with the missionaries."

The following remarks on Mr Nesbit's study of Marathi are from one every way qualified to judge—the Rev. Dr Stevenson :—

"I have before my mind a most vivid picture of the zeal and patience he manifested in the prosecution of this study. We had two little children with us at that time, which, though very young, only between two and four years of age, had learned to talk a little Marathi. With them, in the absence of his Brahman teacher, Mr Nesbit used to converse, marked the way they pronounced the letters, and arranged the words, and was not ashamed to learn from infants. . . . It was a real pleasure to aid such a learner. Nothing was too trivial for him to remark; and nothing once told him was ever forgotten. At the same time nothing was taken for granted. New words and phrases were tested by being used before strangers; nor was he satisfied with speaking so as to be intelligible to household servants, and persons connected with the mission, but he sought to speak so as to be easily understood by all, and to make known the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ in language that might convey its blessed truths fully and clearly to the most cultivated and to the rudest minds. It was this thorough and careful study of the language from the very commencement that enabled my departed friend to take so high a position among Mara-

thi scholars, and to come behind none of his fellow-labourers in elegance of style and idiomatic diction."

"*Oct.* 8.—Engaged the greater part of the day in learning the letters, and the most frequently occurring vocables of the language. I went with Mr Mitchell into the village in the evening, and heard him speak in a tongue to me unknown, to one or two of its inhabitants. They assented to all he said, expressed their admiration of the fine story that he told them respecting the salvation of the soul, and in the end begged of him a piece of cloth for the covering of the body.

"*Oct.* 17.—I continued the reading and translation of the language; and had the pleasure of joining with my companions in the mission, in conversation on a portion of Scripture, and in prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit.

"*Oct.* 20.—In conversing with Mr Crawford, I had the pleasure of hearing of one instance of the usefulness of the schools established by our Society. An aged man, being asked how he became acquainted with the facts of the gospel, replied, that he had learned them from one of the boys attending school, who sometimes took his book and read to him and a few others collected round him.

"*Hurnee, Oct.* 25.—Mr Stevenson, in whose house I had taken up my abode, awoke me early in the morning, that we might go into the fields together. In our walks he pointed out to me a Hindu god. It was the largest of a row of stones forming one of the boundaries of a little field; it was painted with red lead, had been properly consecrated, and thus exalted to divine honours. We visited a school at the same time, and afterwards employed ourselves in reading, translating, and construing a paragraph of one of the Maratha tracts. The study of the language is my great object at present.

"*Oct.* 30.—I visited a Hindu temple, marked the gross obscenity of its representations, and reflected on the polluting and degrading influence of its worship.

"*Nov.* 8.—I went into the Fort with Mr Cooper, and questioned and conversed with a few of the soldiers. Their ignorance I found to be extreme. They had no idea of the eternal existence of God; they scarcely knew that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, or that he was ever on the earth; and they could not tell when or whence he came. Yet these men were Europeans: they were subjects of the British crown."

The soldiers referred to by Mr Nesbit belonged to a company of European Artillery stationed in Hurnee Fort, about fifty strong. The provision made for the religious instruction of Europeans—too small even yet—was then most lamentably defective. At outstations a minister of the gospel was often not seen for twenty years together.

"*Bankote, Dec.* 4.—As Mr Cooper set off this morning on a tour, and Mr Stevenson had gone to Bombay, I thought it advisable to remove to Bankote. The difficulty and danger of travelling by land on horseback appeared to me much greater than I had anticipated. . . . . I read a part of the New Testament with the Moonshee [Pundit], under colour of seeking information from him, communicated to him several facts of the gospel of Jesus Christ. On reaching the passage in Matthew's Gospel, wherein it is said that Jesus 'saves his people from their sins,' I asked the Moonshee who 'his people' were. 'Those of his own caste,' he replied. 'Quite right,' said I; 'and who are those of his own caste?' This led to a long conversation, in which I had an opportunity afforded me of communicating some of the grand truths of the gospel. . . . .

"*Dec.* 19.—In the course of this day a Brahman came

into my room, and among other things, told me with a triumphant smile and hearty laugh that my *Saviour* was a *carpenter*. I endeavoured to shew him that this was a part of His unspeakable glory.

"*Dec.* 26.—In accompanying Mr Mitchell into the bazaar in the evening, I had the satisfaction of understanding his addresses to a few of the common people, and afterwards to a company of Brahmans. A meeting of the missionaries was held this day. Mr Stevenson is appointed to the new station at Bombay.

"*Dec.* 31.—I attended the Marathi worship as usual; joined the prayer-meeting about mid-day; preached in the evening; and had occasion to thank the Lord that he had blessed unto us a day set apart for fasting and prayer."

"*Jan.* 16. 1828.—I performed worship with the servants in Marathi as Mr Mitchell had left us early in the morning; afterwards studied a verse of Sanskrit with my pundit; read and explained a few verses of the New Testament to a company of Brahmans, and attended our stated religious meeting in the evening."

The above entry shews that he was able to speak the language intelligibly within three months and a half. The time is wonderfully short, especially in the case of one who was accurate even to fastidiousness, both as to the pronunciation and idiom of the language. He doubtless dealt as strictly by himself as he did by others. The missionaries who came after him can gratefully recal his inexorable command to "try again," when in their earlier attempts (which he was always most willing to assist) the labouring tongue had failed, in the slightest degree, to give forth the precise sound. Still, it is simply impossible that Mr Nesbit, with all his diligence and care, could have been fully master of the sounds and idiom of Marathi in so short a space; and in

commencing thus early to use it in set addresses, even he ran some risk of attaining fluency at the expense of correctness.

Mr Nesbit at first resided, as we have seen, under the hospitable roof of Mr and Mrs Stevenson. Mr Stevenson's anticipated departure to Bombay gives rise to the following characteristic notice in a letter to his brother :—

"I must take up house about the end of April. 'This is a grief, but I must bear it.' My present way of living is most comfortable. I have nothing to attend to but my books."

We find this subject again and again referred to. In a letter to his mother, he says :—

"You used to lament, my dear mother, over the vexations I should meet with in my intercourse with my servants. I do find them troublesome enough; but, by putting little in their power, I continue to go on pretty comfortably. The first day after *taking up house*, I sat down sadly fatigued in the evening. 'No Marathi learned, no boys instructed, no schools visited, no companies addressed; how shall I bear this burden of household concerns?' The burden, however, has become daily lighter and less, and I am able to pursue my proper work with my usual lightness of spirit and constancy of exertion."

Again, at a considerably later date :—

"These troubles are vexatious in India to a degree of which you can have little conception in England. All the servants of a European in this country, whether they be Hindus, or Mohammadans, or Portuguese, are leagued together for the special purpose of plundering him as much as they can. They charge thirty, fifty, and sometimes one hundred per cent. on every article which they bring from the market. It is in vain to call the shopkeeper from whom they

have purchased them. A promise of remaining his customer is a sufficient bribe to purchase from him an attestation to the truth of as many lies as the servant may prescribe. Indeed, so determined is he to uphold the present system of imposition, that, when you attempt to deal with him without the intervention of a servant, he will let you feel, by the increased expense, that it is much better, as far as mere interest is concerned, to allow matters to remain as they were. The entire want of principle among men of all classes, from the lowest to the highest, is in this country most remarkable. There is Christianity in England, and it makes all those honest who embrace it; and even over those who do not, it exercises such an influence that many at first dare not, and then, through habit, will not, practise any dishonesty. But here the native depravity of man has no salutary restraint. Every man in every instance cheats as much as possible. The richest and most respectable natives have been detected in the meanest acts of fraud, when they thought that no discovery could take place. The shopkeepers and tradesmen are not even ashamed to acknowledge that they practise a system of deception and theft. In sitting down at a shop door, we have often been told by the merchant, in the presence of his customers, that without cheating he could not subsist. A respectable silversmith told us that he would never think of breaking into a house by night, or stealing away household property; but that, when a piece of silver was given him to convert into ornaments, it was his constant practice to appropriate to himself as large a proportion of it as he could, to make up the deficiency in the weight by the admixture of a baser metal, and, after he had thus enriched himself, to charge for the workmanship as if nothing had happened. Little do they know of human nature or human history, who can

speak of the virtue, and prosperity, and happiness of a nation void of Christianity. The whole body of society around us is only a corrupt and loathsome mass. One will readily perceive that in such a state of society as this, it can be no easy matter for any one to guide his household affairs with discretion, or to maintain that calmness of mind, and sweetness of disposition, so indispensably necessary to 'adorn the doctrine' of Jesus Christ."

In this connection the following testimony is most instructive. Mr Nesbit was naturally sensitive; and innumerable things must have occurred that were very trying to his temper. A solemn sense of the presence of God, and of the necessity of ruling his spirit, especially in the presence of the watchful Heathen,—and much prayer for special grace, preserved him from a snare into which, in India, it is, alas! too easy to fall. We quote from Dr Stevenson:—

"In all our intercourse of many years, during several of which he was an inmate of my own family, I do not remember ever to have seen him angry with any one; although no doubt, like other men, often provoked, he had such a command over his temper as never to permit any outward manifestation of wrath to spoil the effects of his counsels to others. He was ever most sensitively alive to the necessity of walking before the world, so as to adorn, in this respect, as well as in every other, the doctrine of our God and Saviour."

We make a few more quotations from his diary:

"*May* 19.—Observed this day as one of fasting and prayer; spent a considerable part of it in religious exercises along with my friends.

"*May* 28.—I read a chapter of the New Testament, and part of a native fable. Gave instruction to a few boys as before, and examined the children of one of the schools.

Was a good deal harassed with secular business throughout the day, and felt myself relieved in uniting with my friends in the usual religious exercises of the evening.

"*Sept.* 19.—I pursued the study of the language as usual. Read a part of Mr Hall's Geography, in Marathi; wrote the introduction to the Annual Report of our mission, and marked the kindness of God in having preserved me one full year in India.

"*Nov.* 1.—I conversed in the morning with a very intelligent young man, a Brahman, who is thoroughly convinced of the folly and falsehood of Hinduism.

"*Nov.* 13.—Proceeded to Khed; examined two schools in the village, and in the evening addressed our own servants and a company of Native soldiers.

"*Dec.* 29.—I observed the day as one of fasting and prayer, and was engaged with my brethren in religious exercises the greater part of the afternoon. Enjoyed the ministrations of Mr Crawford in the evening, and had occasion to bless the Lord for the special manifestations of His love."

The need of more labourers, and the small success of the Mission in the conversion of the heathen, are frequently referred to, and with a solemnity of feeling ever deepening. Alas! how often may the missionary abroad, even more than the minister at home, be described as one

> "Still travailing in second birth
> Of souls that will not be redeemed."

He writes to his brother:—

"1*st Jan.* 1829.—I wish you would correspond with the missionary students, that I may receive as early intelligence as possible of what is going on at home. We feel a sore want of labourers, and are anxious to learn the state of mind in Britain with respect to its supply. When the chil-

dren of Israel laid siege to a city in times of old, and prevailed not, they increased their numbers; they laid new plans; they exerted more force. Then they prevailed. Nay, unless they previously 'enquired of the Lord,' received His counsel, and followed His dictates, they were just as unsuccessful as ever. Now, we have received a command from the same Lord that led and prospered the armies of Israel; we have come to the cities of India, agreeably to it, and are laying siege to them; we have been hitherto baffled in our attempts to take them; we have 'enquired of the Lord;' we have learned that it is because we are so few and ill furnished—because those who send us out care so little about the success of the war, will not engage in it themselves, and grudge the expense and privations they incur by sending out the few they have consented to part with. We have found that it is because our own hearts are faint and our arms feeble, that it is on this account the people are not subdued under us."

For several months about this time, Mr Nesbit's life flowed on in a quiet routine of duty, presenting little variety of incident.

"*Jan.* 27. 1829.—I visited one of the village schools in the morning; went out into the village with a Brahman who has renounced caste, and is desirous of being baptized; addressed the natives, and heard him address them also; returned home, and gave instruction, first to Pedro [a Portuguese convert], then to the Brahman; retired to rest with the anxious hope that, as the former had become useful and honourable in the church, the latter might soon be brought within its pale, and prove a help and comfort to all its members.

"*March* 29.—I preached in English in the morning; heard Mr Stevenson address the natives in the afternoon;

witnessed the baptism of a native; and in the evening received the communion from the hands of Mr Wilson. Two Hindus sat down with us at the table of the Lord; and while Mr Wilson addressed us in English, Mr Mitchell, at intervals, addressed them in Marathi.

"*April* 13.—I examined the quarterly letter to the Directors; gave instruction to Mr and Mrs Wilson in the Marathi language; went out into the village in the evening, accompanied by Mr Wilson, and preached the gospel to the natives."

The Rev. Mr and Mrs Wilson, referred to in the above extracts, had arrived from Europe in the month of February of this year, and had proceeded to the Konkan for the study of the language. The accession of these fellow-labourers must have been an occasion of much joy to Mr Nesbit, particularly as in Mr Wilson he welcomed one whom he had known and valued as a friend at home.

"*May* 12.—I examined the two schools of Jalgaw, and that of Dapoolee throughout the day, and proceeded to Palgud in the evening. Having mistaken the road it was late before I arrived. The people that I met assured me I was in the right way, and would soon reach my place of destination. This I suppose they did at once to please me and save themselves trouble. I was particularly struck on this occasion with the difference between the habits of a Christian population, and those of one in which any approach to disinterested kindness is totally unknown.

"*May* 14.—To-day I met with one or two striking instances of the superstitious, lying, and envious spirit of the natives. One of the teachers begged that I would not pay him his salary in the presence of the people, as they regarded him with an evil eye, and hated him bitterly because he enjoyed so lucrative a situation. 'The love of money' seems

to be the most prominent vice of the people with whom we are conversant; and this naturally leads to much duplicity.

"The case of a man bit by a venomous serpent was reported to me in the morning; I gave the usual medicine, and he recovered. In the afternoon when, as I suppose, the story of his recovery had become somewhat known, I was visited by many labouring under disease, who appeared to be confident that I could restore them to health. One man actually said, that God had told him in a dream that he should find me in a certain place, and that I should give him a medicine that would altogether free him from his malady.

Soon afterwards, he alludes to a subject that has already painfully exercised his mind:—

"My Dear Mother.— . . . . But what, will you ask, is going on in India? Matters still continue the same as at the beginning of our mission. We are still preaching the gospel, and the people are still rejecting it. Mr Cooper and I have just returned home from our evangelistic visitation. In conjunction with him, I have been addressing three companies of Hindus. They all listened to our message with disrelish; many treated it with scorn, and some unwilling to give us a hearing, rose up and went away altogether. Did not the promise of God secure to us ultimate success, we might indeed despair. But desperate as our situation appears, I would not exchange it for that of any man in England. Were I in England, I should still be bound to pray for the heathen, and if my prayer that the kingdom of Christ should come among them was sincere, I should sincerely desire that the words of that kingdom should be published among them; and, if I saw few or none willing to publish them, I should be constrained to go and publish them myself. Here I am then in my proper

place, in the midst of heathen temples, idols, rites, and festivals. The Lord has hitherto given me most extraordinary health and vigour for the acquisition of the language, and now I am able to tell the people in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. The Lord give me wisdom and humility, zeal and love, faith and patience; and in the morning, I will sow the precious seed which He has committed to my trust, and in the evening I will not withhold my hand; I will sow and water it, and look to God for the increase."

The labours of the mission, however, had not been wholly unblessed. He writes to a relative:—

"*Bankote, May* 1829.—I informed you in my last that a native of Portuguese extraction had been joined to the church in this place. The priest forbade him to read the New Testament, but he had previously derived so much pleasure in the perusal of it, that he could not comply with the prohibition. He grew daily in knowledge and wisdom, and presented very satisfactory marks of an operation of divine grace on his soul. He was baptized, and on the same day sat down at the Lord's table along with us. He has not disappointed our hopes since that time. We believe that he exhibits the power of the gospel in his life, and we know that he announces the truth of the gospel with his lips. A young Hindu, formerly an idolater, has been with us for some time, and has excited our hopes with respect to his conversion.

"*June* 17.—Since Sabbath evening the rain has been pouring down upon us in torrents. As much has fallen in two or three days as falls in Britain in the course of the year. Perhaps the wonder thus exhibited in nature may in this very place soon be realised in the dispensations of grace. The ground has lain bare and desolate for months.

Suddenly the rain falls; and the mountains are clothed with grass, and the valleys covered with corn. On the moral wilderness that stretches around us showers may as suddenly fall, and on the dry ground floods may be as copiously poured out. So 'shall the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose,' and the whole moral creation 'burst forth into joy and singing."

The following notices a blessed change among their own countrymen, that by this time had begun greatly to gladden the hearts of the missionaries:—

"The work of the Lord prospers among the Europeans. There is scarcely a military station where some pious officer is not to be found; and it is most gratifying to reflect that most of those who are so, are eminently zealous and active in the cause of God. A gentleman who, about three years ago, was himself a most dissolute character, has lately been honoured to become the instrument of converting three of the native Hindus; and all that was left for the neighbouring missionaries to do, was the admitting of them into the Christian Church by baptism."

Already the health of some of his associates was failing; and while he rejoiced over the arrival of others in every way qualified for the work, yet to lose a fellow-labourer, and especially such a one as Mr Crawford, was exceedingly painful.

He writes to his mother in June:—

". . . In my last letter I mentioned that Mr Crawford was likely to return to his native land. It will afford you no small satisfaction to converse with one who has held many a long conversation with me in India, with whom I have often taken sweet counsel, and united in the exercises of devotion; with whom I have gone forth among the heathen and preached the gospel of Christ. I do not recollect of

being so much benefited by any man's prayers and conversation as by those of Mr Crawford. Wherever he dwells he seems to leave a blessing behind him. The gentleman with whom he took up his abode, before leaving Bombay, is filled with a gratitude which he is unable to express towards that God who, in His gracious providence, brought such a man to his house, and privileged him to entertain him as his guest.

"I informed you in my last letter that Mr and Mrs Wilson had come down to Hurnee, and that they had taken up their abode with me. Mr Wilson is making great progress in the language, and will soon be able to address the natives. Mrs Wilson's progress has, on various accounts, not been so great. She is, however, a very accomplished and excellent person, and has great sweetness of disposition. I feel much pleasure in the society of both, and through the kindness of Mrs Wilson, am particularly privileged in an exemption from the troubles of housekeeping."

"19*th Sept.* 1829.—Finished the examination of a Marathi tract; read a little Hindustáni; conversed a considerable time with my pundit on the absurdities of the Hindu religion; united with Mr Wilson in preaching the gospel to the natives, and had occasion to thank the Lord that he had preserved me two full years in India.

"19*th Oct.*—Having been appointed to preach the annual sermon for the Scottish Missionary Society in Bombay, I made preparations for going to the Presidency. Rode to Bankote in the afternoon.

"1*st Nov.*—I preached the annual sermon for the Bombay Auxiliary Scottish Missionary Society. Enjoyed the ministrations of Mr Allen, one of the American missionaries, in the evening, and afterwards received the communion from the hands of Mr Taylor of Belgaum.

"*2d Nov.*—Preached in the American Mission Chapel in the evening.

"*3d Nov.*—I attended the examination of the female schools under the superintendence of the American Mission. Made an address to the children. Sat in deliberation with my brethren of the Missionary Union. Addressed the teachers, as on a former occasion. Spent the evening with Mr Graves and Dr Maxwell in conversation and religious exercises."

Towards the close of the year he writes to his sister :—

"The man who utters falsehoods without any temptation, and commits theft whenever he has an opportunity of doing so, is confident in his own righteousness. He will confess that he gains his livelihood by lying and stealing; and yet, when he is asked whether he has anything to recommend him to God, he will reply that he considers himself to be possessed of a considerable share of religious merit. If asked the reason why he thinks so, he will tell you that, when he rises in the morning, he washes his mouth, makes obeisance to the sun, and invokes the name of God; that he presents flowers to the images in the temples; that he sometimes sits a whole hour and repeats the name of God; that he washes himself before he sits down to dinner, and gives part of his meal to his household god; that he gives a handful of rice to the poor, and neglects not to feed the crows and the foxes. . . . . .

"Since I last wrote to you, two of our number [Messrs Mitchell and Stevenson] have been at Poona, and have been daily attended by very large audiences. The Brahmans made a bitter opposition; but all things have been overruled, and, we trust, will be made to issue in the conversion of many souls.

". . . . . Are there no more missionary students? The

Society will probably send out laymen to superintend the schools, and free the ordained ministers from every labour but that of 'prayer and the ministry of the word.' Piety, and the capacity of learning a language, are all the qualifications that will be required."

It was at this time that Mr Nesbit first engaged in any extensive itineracy for the purpose of preaching the gospel. In company with Mr Cooper, he proceeded as far as the large town of Rajapoor, about a hundred miles south of their own station, and in ancient times a kind of capital of the Konkan. The tour occupied rather more than six weeks.

"*Dec.* 15.—Set out on a tour down the coast with Mr Cooper.

"*Dec.* 16.—Having been favoured with a good wind all night, found ourselves in the morning at the mouth of the river on which the town we intended to visit was situated. Were prevented from proceeding further by the wind; went on shore, and had an opportunity of preaching the gospel to one or two individuals. Went on board our boat again when the wind had changed in the afternoon, and continued sailing up the river till darkness set in.

"*Dec.* 17.—We rode to Rajapoor in the morning; spoke for several hours on the subjects of Christianity and Mohammadanism with a Musulman, a native officer in the army. Went into the village in the evening, and sought for a central place where we might meet with the people for the purpose of instructing them.

"*Dec.* 18.—Spent the morning with Mr Cooper in distributing tracts to the Brahmans, and preaching. Returned home, and had the satisfaction of being there engaged in the same work the greater part of the day. The people came to us in great numbers to receive books; and they

were not unwilling to sit down and listen to our discourses on the principal truths of the gospel.

"*Dec.* 24.—I united with Mr Cooper in preaching the gospel in the village in the morning. Afterwards went with him to a shed [made of branches of the palm-tree] which we have prepared in the most frequented part of the village. Preached there to a numerous audience.

"*Dec.* 25.—This day was spent as the preceding. Our audience in the shed was large and interesting. Little opposition was made; and an opportunity was thus afforded of fully and freely preaching the gospel.

"*Dec.* 26.—The dispute in which the Brahmans are generally desirous of involving us, is that which relates to the origin and existence of moral evil. On this subject they use the most blasphemous language that can well be conceived. One man, in the course of conversation, declared that, as God was the Father of the universe, He ought to make all his children good and happy; that He was guilty in not doing so; and that, on account of His being the author of all sin in the world, He was a greater sinner than any other being whatever. This doctrine is not only to be found among the learned; it has been imbibed by Hindus of every rank. . . . When I asked the person formerly alluded to why God allowed men any pleasure at all, since, according to his statement, He delighted in evil, he answered, that immediate destruction would not answer His purpose—that He chose rather to do the work gradually —that He first bruised us, as with a pestle in a mortar, and then crushed us to death."

In a letter to his brother, Mr Nesbit mentions that the preaching at Rajapoor excited a great deal of opposition and ill-will, but still he believed that much good had been effected. A Brahman was stationed near the shed to pre-

vent any one approaching them, but curiosity often broke through the restraint, and the audiences in general were large. They preached in numerous villages on the way back to Hurnee. He writes to his sister:—

"*Jan.* 9. 1830.—In the temple, in which we took up our abode, we had occasion to witness the worship, and hear the prayers, of several idolaters. Those who had nothing particular to ask made their bow, and went away. Those who were labouring under disease or distress were not so easily satisfied. Such individuals feel that it is not sufficient that the god should be seen. They wish him also to speak. This, however, they find that, without some management, he will not do. They, therefore, apply several grains of moistened rice, or some other substance, to the right and left sides of his body. They relate the particulars of the distressing case, with respect to which they beg his assistance. They then tell him that, if he means to be favourable, they would thank him to intimate his gracious intention by first letting go the grains on his right or left side, according to their specification. A child may perceive that the adhesion of the grain to the image is owing simply to its being wetted when applied, and that, consequently, where the moisture is least the grain will fall first. . . . . The earnestness of one of the petitioners, whose devotion we had occasion to witness in the temple was painfully striking, and altogether most melancholy. 'O goddess,' said he, 'have pity upon me, and fulfil my request. If thou art angry with me kill me at once. But, oh! be propitious. Restore me to health, and give me food and raiment. Thou art my only refuge. I have come to thee for succour; run to my relief. If thou accomplishest my request, thy power will appear, and thy name will be great. But if thou sufferest me, thy worshipper, to perish, thy character will be ruined, and no one will

so much as ask who art thou?' It will be observed that this prayer relates wholly to the things of time and sense. For illumination of mind, purity of heart, and other spiritual blessings, an idolater never proffers a request. 'He minds earthly things,' and these alone.

"Towards evening we had occasion to witness the departure of one of the gods belonging to the temple. A marriage was to be celebrated between a male and female deity in a neighbouring village, and one of the gods of this village must grace the ceremony with his presence. He is, therefore, well washed, dressed in his best turban, and adorned with a quantity of flowers. Thus attired, he sets out on his journey. But, alas! he 'must needs be borne, because he cannot go.' His worshippers are willing to lend him the assistance he requires. They seat him in a palanquin, apply their shoulders to the burden, and carry him safely to his place of destination.

"Two individuals who are well acquainted with the gospel have requested baptism at our hands. They are servants in a gentleman's family, and have for some time regularly heard the gospel. They are men of the lowest caste; but if they are possessed of the 'precious faith' of the gospel, they are 'kings and priests unto God,' and possess an elevation to which none of their haughty neighbours have yet attained."

Near the end of the tour he writes to Mr Wilson:—

"*Jan.* 1830.—My Dear John,—. . . . We have had good audiences, and have met with little opposition in the towns and villages. Still, however, no one has come to us enquiring for himself, as an individual, 'what he must do to be saved.' It would be well if we could feel the destitution of our circumstances, and make our supplication unto the Lord, 'with strong crying and tears.' O that our

trials and sorrows might sanctify us, and make us meet for our Master's use! O that the Lord would 'reveal His Son in us,' and advance His kingdom by us!"

He writes to his sister, in March 1830:—

". . . . My last letter was dated from Rajapoor. Mr Cooper and I remained in that quarter for some time. We met with bitter opposition from the Brahmans; but had at the same time the satisfaction of distributing many books among the people, and of communicating very diffusively a knowledge of the grand principles of Christianity. You may have often wondered at the simplicity of the sermons recorded in the New Testament. They are just such as we daily preach among the heathen. The fallen, depraved, and guilty state of man; the necessity of an atonement for sin; the impossibility of man's making this atonement for himself; the utter inefficacy of all ablutions, gifts, and sacrifices, of all mental sorrow, bodily penance, and even of true repentance itself, with respect to the taking away of sin; the necessity of a mediator between God and man, who may stand surety *to* the former and *for* the latter; the character and dignity which this mediator must sustain and inherently possess; the realisation of all this in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man; the covenant made between Him and the Father; the fulfilment of its terms in His birth, sufferings, and death; the 'everlasting righteousness' thus 'brought in'; the absolute necessity of renouncing all self-righteousness, and cleaving to 'the righteousness which is of God'; the promise of the Holy Spirit as the earnest of an everlasting inheritance; the promise of that inheritance itself which shall be fully possessed and enjoyed when Christ comes the second time 'without sin unto salvation'; these are the grand and simple truths on which we continu-

ally insist, and which we endeavour to express in language, and illustrate by figures, in such a way as to be comprehensible even by a child. The history of Christ from His birth to His resurrection forms a standing part of almost every discourse. 'He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil. He gave sight to the blind, feet to the lame, life to the dead. He died for our sins. He rose again from the dead.'"

In the same letter he writes on a grave question that has been already more than once referred to:—

"Why the heathen do not believe on Christ is a legitimate inquiry, and one which it is binding upon us to make. Is it because God has doomed these idolatrous nations to destruction, and therefore says to us, as he did to Jeremiah, 'Pray *not* for them; for I will not hear'? Or is it not because the churches of the present day have lost the faith and holiness of those primitive times, and the missionaries whom they send forth among the heathen bear neither the outward semblance nor internal character of the apostles of the Lord Jesus? We ought to inquire and discover the reason wherefore 'the Lord contendeth with us,'—why He hath 'cast us off, and will not go forth with our hosts.' Surely were He to 'give us help, we should do valiantly, and soon tread down all our enemies.' Had British arms been as long and as grievously unsuccessful in any part of India as Christian arms have been, the whole nation would have been excited to the most fervent indignation; supplies of men and treasure would have poured in to an indefinite extent; the officers actually engaged would have been animated with a zeal and boldness bordering on the strength and recklessness of despair; it would have become a subject of consideration whether it were not better to exhaust the resources of the empire rather than suffer the shame of disappointment and defeat. Had

the soldiers of the cross as high a regard for the honour of Christ as our countrymen have for the honour of the British name, they would long ere now have felt themselves shamefully defeated, and seen with anguish the glory of their Master wantonly trampled in the dust. We are daily speaking of the overflowing goodness and unlimited power of Christ. But the people mock us, and ask when the manifestations of His power and goodness are to be seen. We have pledged the name of Christ; and the pledge yet remains unredeemed. We have, as it were, been 'taking His name in vain.' We have been holding Him up to the curious gaze, insolent scorn, and proud rejection of the people. Oh that the reproaches of those who 'say unto us continually, Where is your God'? might fall upon us so that we might *feel* them, and turn with holy indignation for the vindication of the Saviour's honour, and lamenting our shame and utter destitution, offer up the 'prayer of the destitute,' which Jehovah has promised to regard! But alas! we are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. Our prayers are offered up accordingly. We receive not because we ask not. 'We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss.' . . . .

"While reflecting lately on my want of success as a minister of the gospel in India, it gave me great comfort to learn a very satisfactory instance in which a minister's 'works may follow him', even after he has left and partially forgotten the scene in which they were performed.

"It appears that, during the short time I remained at Gosport, my preaching was blessed to the 'turning of two individuals from the error of their way, and saving their souls from death.' The intelligence was brought by Mr Fyvie, a missionary who had embarked at Portsmouth when he took his passage for Bombay. . . . .

"I never knew that I had so little courage and so much bashfulness, till tried by these stout-hearted and brazen-faced heathen. Neither had I formerly learned the necessity of the warning, 'Be not afraid of their faces;' nor the appropriateness of the request, 'Pray for me that I may speak *boldly*, as I ought to speak.'"

The following allusion, in a letter to his brother (written during the tour), to the natural productions of the country, is not devoid of interest :—*

"*Jan.* 1830.—You ask me to tell you what are the productions, the husbandry, the manners, the religious habits and opinions prevalent in India. You are aware that the chief production in India is rice. Wheat grows plentifully in some districts, and barley is not unknown. You may have heard of maize or Indian corn. Besides these there are a hundred other grains, of which I might mention the Indian names, but which I feel myself incompetent to describe. Red pepper, chilj, and other pungent substances, are found here in abundance. Creeping plants are very numerous during the rains. The vine is cultivated in some parts of the country. The orange-tree I have sometimes seen, but its fruit does not appear to come to great perfection. The mango seems to be the best fruit-tree in the country. In the orchards in the Konkan the principal trees are the the mango, the jack, and the cocoa-nut. The fruit of the jack-tree grows from the trunk, while the leaves and branches afford it shade and protection. The cocoa-nut appears to be the most useful one in the country. Its leaves (or, if you choose to call them so, branches, for they can support a man sitting upon them), are used for forming the roofs of sheds and houses; its juice affords a sweet and

* The reader who is interested in the Natural History of the Maratha country, may consult a note in the Appendix.

nutritious draught, when it is first extracted, and forms an intoxicating liquor when fermented; its fruit, which grows in the shape of a very large nut, yields both meat and drink; the fibrous coating of the nut is manufactured into ropes; and the trunk becomes at last the beam of a house, or, if very large, is converted into a boat. The plantain (a shrub of a year's growth) affords fruit, plates, buckets, snuff-boxes, &c. Nature is here put to a thousand uses, of which you have no conception in Britain. If a Hindu cannot get a large plantain leaf to dine upon, he collects a number of smaller leaves, takes a piece of a twig, and sews a plate for himself in a very short time. 'They sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons,' is a very difficult passage to a native of Britain; but the native of India understands it at once. The one begins to think of threads and needles; the other thinks of nothing but a slender piece of wood, which is broken off at every stitch. . . . The country would altogether appear to you much inferior to England or Scotland. If any person comes to it with the view of obtaining luxuries, he will find himself miserably disappointed. I find I have answered only one of your questions, and that too in a very defective manner."

All the missionaries regarded the circulation of religious tracts as an important part of evangelistic agency. At the commencement of their labours they received grants of religious publications in the Marathi language from the Bible Society, the American Mission, and the Bombay Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Ere long they were able to prepare additional tracts of their own. A most important institution, the "Bombay Tract and Book Society," was formed in December 1827, on a broad and catholic basis. It has gone on increasing in strength and usefulness ever since, and has been

of the greatest service to all Missions in Western India. It was during this year that Mr Nesbit composed his first Marathi tract. It was called "The True Atonement." After fully exposing the utter insufficiency and folly of the manifold "atonements" for sin which are practised by the Hindus, it unfolds, with great clearness and force, the Atonement which the word of God reveals as effected through the death of Jesus Christ. The tract has always been held in high esteem, and has gone through twelve editions. It has also been translated into Gujarati.

Mr Nesbit writes in reference to this subject :—

"One of the principal atonements prescribed in the Hindu Shastras, is the presentation of cows and money to the Brahman. It is evident that, according to this system, a rich man may easily procure the pardon of his sin, while a poor man cannot. 'That," replies the Brahman, 'is just as it should be. The poor man is poor because of the sins of a former birth ; and it is right he should feel the bitter effects of them in his present state.'

"In speaking of the atonements prescribed by the Hindu Shastras, and comparing them with the atonement made by Jesus Christ, I was much struck with the dignity of the scheme of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures, and exulted to think how suitable it was to the character of God and to the condition of man ; how admirably calculated to promote the holiness and happiness of the universe ; and how well the revelation of such a scheme deserved the name of 'the *glorious* gospel of the blessed God.'"

The next entry in his diary refers to that mother whom he loved so tenderly :—

"23*d July*.—Having received intelligence of the death of my beloved mother, I spent the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.

He writes to his father:—

"I had discovered the blackness of the seal before I opened John's last letter. The first sentence gave me a hint of its contents, and I more than guessed to whom the whole referred. The word 'mother' met my eye; and no doubt remained. Sighing and palpitation of heart was the only immediate effect. But, when the subsequent part of the letter made me a spectator of the affecting scene at Sunnyside, I found myself no longer able to comply with my mother's injunction that I should not cry aloud nor weep. Weep we must, weep we may. Weeping is a testimony to the evil of the fall which God himself has appointed, and it is, on our part, an acknowledgment of it with which he is not displeased. . . . We are not, however, to sorrow as those that have no hope. While we bear witness to the evil of sin, we must also bear witness to the excellence of salvation. It is only the joy arising from the contemplation of the latter which God allows to swallow up the sorrow occasioned by the former. Time, or business, or amusement, has no right to dry up the mourner's tears. God has made him weep, God has wounded him, God's hand alone should wipe away the tear, and heal the wound. . . . . .

"When I survey the last days of my beloved mother, I am apt to say, 'Oh that I had been present to instruct and comfort her, to fix her mind on that 'finished work' in which all her hope was placed!' Again I say, 'all is well,' the Lord hath more than supplied my place; He hath given her many comforters instead of one; He hath, in infinite mercy, constituted the members of my family a 'chosen generation—a royal priesthood.' . . . . You, my dear father, must feel yourself still more than the younger members of your family, 'a pilgrim and stranger on the earth.' Live,

then, like a 'pilgrim and stranger.' Your only object ought to be a *happy termination of your journey.*

"My dear mother's answer to one of ——'s questions, 'No, nothing is necessary but faith to lay hold of the finished work of Jesus Christ,' and her statement of the desire of her heart, 'Oh that the Lord would pour out his Holy Spirit upon them, that they may no longer profane his Sabbath, and neglect his ordinances,' are to me the most precious parts of my dear brother's letter. . . . The Christian friend who should attend my dying bed, should be permitted only to expatiate on one subject, and that subject should be, the tender affection, the matchless worth, and the resistless power of Him who alone can save me from death. 'Give *strong drink* to him that is ready to perish, and *wine* to those that be of heavy heart.' But, alas, how weak and good for nothing is any cordial that has not the 'body and blood' of Christ for its sum and substance!

"I had daily prayed for my dear mother nearly five months and a half after she was far beyond the reach of my prayers. Every morning and evening I find that she must be excluded from my petitions. She is not, however, excluded from 'my song of praise.' She still stands by your side; I give thanks for her, and pray for you. God only grant that we may all be enabled eternally to give thanks for each other. . . . 'She is not dead but sleepeth,' is the impression on my mind. I trust it is not one which the sight of the coffin or the grave would chase away. Standing on Golgotha itself, let me exclaim, 'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?'

"I much desire a more full and particular account of my dear mother's sayings and doings in her last days. The two passages to which I have already referred I would not part with for worlds. The first illustrates her faith; the

second, her feeling. How glad am I that Christ's 'finished work' was all her hope! How it would have overwhelmed me with sorrow, had I seen her clinging to anything of her own!

"The intelligence of my beloved mother's death found me prepared for it by personal affliction. I have often feared lest it should find me indulging pride, carelessness, or carnality. But God graciously prepared me by affliction, as he did you by outward distress. . . . . I am living at present with one of the chaplains of the East India Company, who entertains and treats me as his own brother. The advantage of a change, and the benefit of medical advice, brought me to his house.

"Now, my dear father, my dear brothers and sisters, 'I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace,' that faithful word, 'which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.' Yours most affectionately, ROBERT NESBIT."

CHAPTER V.

FAILING HEALTH—REMOVAL TO POONA—WORK AMONG EUROPEANS—ITINERACY.

Mr Nesbit's health had perceptibly been giving way for some time. He suffered especially during the south-west monsoon, which continues for four months, from the beginning of June to the end of September. During that space the fall of rain is very heavy on the coast of Western India, amounting in the Konkan to seventy, eighty, or more than a hundred inches,—

"Ingeminant austri, et *densissimus* imber."

Mr Nesbit hoped that his health might be benefited by a missionary tour, which he made in company with Mr Mitchell, in the beginning of the year 1831, to Rutnagherry, an influential town nearly a hundred miles to the south. They had heard that a spirit of inquiry had been excited among the Roman Catholics residing there; but the result did not equal their expectations. They then proceeded to Mahabuleshwar and Wáí, and other important places near the source of the river Krishná. They came in contact chiefly with Brahmans. At the former place they hardly got a hearing; at the latter, they were better received.

Mr Nesbit afterwards visited Bombay; and, though his health derived little benefit, the opportunity of holding converse with dear Christian friends was a great refreshment to his spirit. He lived under the hospitable roof of Mr and Mrs Wilson, and had the pleasure of witnessing and aiding in the various evangelistic labours in which they were engaged. They had gone to Bombay in Nov. 1829. He had also happy intercourse with the members of the American and Church of England Missions. Visitations of schools, and daily preachings in the streets, are noted in his journal.

"*May* 1831.—This day I took a view of the idolatries of Bombay. The number and eagerness of the worshippers at the idol temples was most affecting to witness. Mr Wilson shewed me a whole street of temples. The surrounding population appeared a living mass of corruption; and the mind asked in despair, when it could be purified..... All haters and blasphemers of the Most High! When shall they be 'washed?' When shall they be 'sanctified'? When shall they be 'turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?'.....

"Visited the caves of Elephanta with Mr Wilson, and found them well calculated to inform the mind, and strengthen the memory in regard to many parts of the Hindu mythology."

To his Sister.

"*Bombay, May* 1831.—My Dear Sister,—I have come to this place for the benefit of my health. I have been troubled for some time with a nervous weakness which a change of place, and circumstances, and society, may be blessed to remove. I often sink with a feeling of my own utter impotency, and then the look of a child is enough to agitate me. Against the rebellious people around me I am

required to 'set my face as a flint;' but of so soft material does it seem to be at present composed, that it melts away under the influence of their gaze. I trust the present occasion may be one in which I shall receive a new confidence,—one founded in the deepest humility, and supported, not by any consciousness of my own powers, but by a constant and comfortable reliance on the 'very present help' of an Almighty Saviour. Since I came here I have, in some measure, recovered my usual strength; and I trust that a short time will suffice to dissipate those feelings which now clog the exercise of my mind, and would fain shut my lips in silence.

"——'s letter of January last certified to me an event to which I had, for a considerable time, looked forward with sometimes mournful and sometimes happy feelings. And now what do I feel? Blessed are they who have entered upon their *rest*. They have 'departed, and are with Christ;' and this is certainly far better 'than abiding in the flesh.' Thrice happy ye who have travelled through the wilderness, passed the Jordan, and entered into Canaan! No weakness or languor, no fear or perturbation, no darkness or distress, no pain or sorrow, no sin or shame, can ever reach your abode, or occasion the least diminution of your bliss. Were it not selfish, how fondly would I cherish the desire of now joining your company! But let me not despond. From all my weakness, worthlessness, and insufficiency, God can and will take occasion to promote His glory in this world; and the display of it He will perfect in the world above.

"'The sting of death is sin;' but sin has been subdued by the Saviour, and death has been thus rendered stingless and harmless to all his people. You saw the truth of this in the case of our dear sister. The 'king of terrors' could

not frighten her. She saw him; but she was never permitted to contemplate him alone. Had she done so she must have recoiled from his loathsome and horrific form. Her eye was attracted by one who smiled upon her, and said, 'Fear not; I am the living one, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of the invisible world, and of death.' The scenes of heaven, in all their glory and beauty, were spread before her; she saw them, and her soul feasted on them. She triumphed over death, even when she was bending under his stroke, and smiled at the grave, even when it was opening its mouth to receive her. Death was to her the beginning of everlasting life; nay, that life seems to have passed death's boundaries, as if anxious to meet her here and accompany her through his dreary regions. I have no sighs to heave, and no tears to shed for her. For myself and for my brethren, in a like situation, would I weep. Especially would I weep for those who are unprepared for death,—who know not 'the Lord of life,' and seek not life as a blessing from His hands.

"I see —— alludes in his letter to my probable usefulness had I remained at home. I have no doubt that had I remained at home, I should have been instrumental in the conversion of many more than I shall ever be here. Yet I have as little doubt that I am more useful here than I should have been there. The work of converting the heathen must be begun, and continued in the midst of numberless discouragements. If this must be done, some persons must do it; and the more difficult and disheartening the work is, so much the more *useful* are the labourers who engage in it, and carry it forward. It requires much more faith to do the work of a Jeremiah, than that of a John. The former was often tempted to say, 'I will speak no more in his

name;' the latter saw the pressure of the people into the kingdom of heaven; and their joy and eagerness sweetly and powerfully called forth his energies."

He returned to Hurnee in the beginning of June, preaching in the villages by the way, in company with the Rev. J. B. Dickson, a missionary of the Church of England.

The small missionary band, already reduced, was becoming still smaller. Mr Crawford had left the country, as was mentioned. Mrs Cooper's health had, for a considerable time, been very feeble, and Mr Cooper had removed with his family to the Neilgherry hills in the end of the preceding year. Here his wife died. Mr Nesbit's sympathy with the bereaved husband was true and deep. It had been so in former trials. Thus, on one occasion, when Mr Cooper's sole surviving child seemed sinking under the same malady as had carried off several others, Mr Nesbit continued a whole night in prayer, pleading that the little one might be spared. Nor was the fervent supplication offered in vain: the child was spared.

It was not only the Scottish Mission that was smitten. Mr Nesbit writes in August of this year:—

"The last six months have witnessed the death of many missionaries in this quarter. No less than five in the single Presidency of Bombay have, during that short period, bid adieu to their earthly labours. . . . . Mrs Cooper had gone to the Neilgherry hills for the restoration of her health; but there she found no relief but that which the grave supplied. She found, however, consolation of mind. . . . . Death appeared to her a stream narrow and easy to be passed. Its darkness and deepness occasioned her no alarm, because she knew her Lord was with her. . . . . Her last days demonstrated to all that witnessed them the faithfulness and kindness of the Saviour. Those who had formerly

been afraid of death 'thanked God' when they saw her, 'and took courage.'"

In compliance with medical advice, Mr Nesbit now left the Konkan, and removed to Poona in the Deccan.

He writes to his father, in August:—

"You will ask the reason of my removal to Poona. It is this. The rainy season has always proved hurtful to my health. . . . The medical men in the neighbourhood advised me to remove to Poona, where the rains are much lighter, and the climate more bracing.* I accordingly left Hurnee on the 8th of this month, and am now comfortably settled with Mr Stevenson, who remains permanently at this station. Here I shall have more work than at Hurnee, but this will be so much the better, if I have only ability to perform it. The nervous weakness, of which I told you in my last letter, is now in a great measure removed. I desire health and strength to do the work of the Lord, and to glorify His name. With this object in view I pray for them, and use the means of securing them. But certainly 'to depart and be with Christ is *far better.*'"

At this large and important place Mr Nesbit found much to interest and occupy him; and his health was so far recruited that he could perform no small amount of labour. One important feature in Poona was the European population. It is the largest military station in the Bombay Presidency; and the Presbyterian soldiers quartered there looked to the Scottish Missionaries for spiritual instruction. Feeling the overwhelming magnitude of their own proper work—the evangelization of the natives—the Missionaries were anxious that a chaplain should be appointed to the Presbyterian troops; and earnest appeals were made on the

* The rains in Poona seldom amount to thirty inches; and the climate in the south-west monsoon is almost European.

subject to Government, but in vain. Had the chaplains of the Church of England then at Poona been men of evangelical sentiments, the case perhaps might have been different; but, as matters stood, there seemed a necessity that the missionaries should minister to their countrymen on the Lord's day, and, as time permitted, visit them during the week.

The following extract from a letter, written after Mr Nesbit's death, by a pious officer (Lieut.-Col. S.), will shew what a blessed influence Mr Nesbit was, at this time, exercising over Europeans:—

"My acquaintance with him commenced in 1831; and if ever a thirsty soul drank in wisdom and knowledge from the lips of another, mine did from that precious servant of Christ. His expositions, his sermons, his manner of reading the word of God, his delivery, his attitude, were all so exactly what my new-born soul, in its fervour and solemnity, delighted in, that I think I could have sat throughout the day untired in listening to him. It was my privilege to live within a few doors of his dwelling, so that whatever difficulty required solution — whatever fierce temptation needed help to turn aside or subdue, he was the spiritual champion behind whose buckler, as it were, I fought. How well do I remember those happy days! and how sweet is the remembrance of them! How often have I run over to him with some alarming spiritual trouble—some dreadful suggestion from the father of lies—which I then had not sagacity to confute; and with what sweet looks of love would he immediately lay aside whatever he was engaged in, and take me by the hand and seat me down beside him, and then with such gentleness, such persuasive wisdom, such winning eloquence, and convincing argument, assuage all my trouble, and allay all my fears; and I would return

home stronger, sensibly stronger, in the faith; and so much did I grow by these conflicts (and they were of a deep and subtle metaphysical kind) through the wisdom of this dear friend, that Satan soon found it a losing game, and ceased to harass me with them. A young officer friend, whose eyes were opened shortly after my own in those days, came to Poona at my urgent invitation. I pressed him to come, because I knew how invaluable to him would be the aid and instruction of the dear friend whom I had found. He came, and was almost always with Mr Nesbit, drinking in from him with avidity of the waters of life. And several others whom I introduced to him derived the same benefit, and have become what they are, through the blessing of God, on his ministrations.

"How he used to love to take me with him in his street-preachings, and point me out in his partial affection, as an instance that more of the 'sahib logue' than the *padres* merely, could be influenced by the grace and love of the Saviour. And oh, the rich treat it was to hear him in those street-preachings! What eloquence in his expressions, what pure idiom in his language, what absolute perfection of pronunciation! To hear him talk Marathi was a treat of itself. I know but two or three who ever equalled, and none who excelled, him in this."

The Poona missionaries, as soon as the rains of 1831 were over, prepared to engage in itineracy. As yet the Deccan was, for the most part, to the messengers of peace an untrodden field—the Government having, till of late, refused them permission to preach above the Ghauts; and now the evangelists of all the societies labouring in Western India, were eager to proclaim the name of Christ to as many as they could reach. Mr Nesbit was thus busily engaged all the cold season. He twice visited a very remarkable place,

Jejúrí, about thirty miles from Poona, and the chief place of "hook-swinging" in Western India. The missionaries, when it was possible, went "by two and two;" he was accompanied on the one occasion by Mr Wilson,—on the other by Mr Stevenson. A long and important journey succeeded—undertaken in company with Mr Stevenson. They proceeded as far as Málegaum, a large town in Khándesh. On the far greater part of the route no missionary had, till now, been seen. They were occupied for five weeks, and had daily opportunities of preaching the gospel to assemblies for the most part eager to hear the new doctrine, and of disseminating among all who could read* copies of the Scriptures and Christian tracts.

The work among their own countrymen ere long assumed a remarkable aspect. Mr Nesbit writes to Mr Cooper towards the end of 1832, after the latter had been compelled by severe sickness to return to Britain:—

"—— appears to be now a renewed man. The increase of pious Europeans in India goes on with the same steady progress which you had the happiness for several years of observing. I have just been conversing and corresponding with a young gentleman, who had imbibed Arian doctrines, but now finds that they yield no comfort and afford no strength. He feels that he is a great sinner, groans under the weight of his depravities, and earnestly desires light and purity. I entertain, therefore, the highest hopes with respect to him; and trust his next letter will fully verify them.

"There has been lately a great awakening among the soldiers at this station. I was engaged for nearly two

* A number unhappily small everywhere. Taking India as a whole, it has been doubted if four or five per cent. of the population can read. Among the readers the proportion of Brahmans is, of course, very large.

weeks, about five or six hours a day, in examining candidates for the Lord's table, when the ordinance of the Supper was last administered. About three times the usual number were admitted as communicants; and many of the spectators were deeply and, I trust, some of them permanently affected by what they saw and heard on that occasion. Three Roman Catholics have lately come to me to recant, and I have hopes not only of their renouncing the errors of Rome, but of their embracing 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'"

In the same letter he thus alludes to the work among the natives. Let the date be noted; for in later years he would have spoken in far more joyful terms of the character of many of the converts.

"I cannot speak of any such success among the natives. Many of our native converts are, I fear, rotten at heart; and few, very few, are adding to their number. There are at present two female candidates for baptism at this station.

"Mr Read [of the American Mission] has been very successful, or very much deceived, in his work among the inmates of the poor's asylum at Nuggur.* We hope that the former is the case, both on his account and our own.

"Let us unite our prayers for the influences of the Spirit, and ask that they may be poured out as 'floods on every part of this dry ground.'"

"*Sept.* 22, 1832.—I rode to Seroor in the morning. Visited the English burying-place in the vicinity of the native town, for the purpose of seeing the tomb of Colonel Wallace, whom I had heard the Hindus had deified since his death. I took one of my servants with me as a witness. We had no sooner approached the tomb than the woman

* The American Mission had founded a station at Ahmednuggur in December 1831.

who takes care of the idolatrous apparatus connected with it joined us. The following conversation took place :—

"*Missionary* (addressing his servant).—'You see, Bowani, what your countrymen have done. They have made a god of an English gentleman. You observe the apparatus for having him furnished with light at night, like the other Hindu gods. You see the sacred Toolusee planted in his presence, and the utensils for offering incense immediately before him ?'

"*Servant.*—'Why should the people make a god of a dead man ?'

"*Missionary.*—'You may well say so. But, you see, they've made a god of *this* dead man.'

"*Servant.*—'They may make what they please; but, with all their making, is he not a man still ?'

"*Missionary.*—'True; he is no god. But the people are so foolish as to worship him as such. And this is the way that all the Hindu gods came into existence. Originally they were no gods, and they are no gods yet; but men have taken a delight in fashioning for themselves objects of worship which they persuade themselves are divine. It grieves me exceedingly to see what you do here, good woman. Why have you made a god of an Englishman ?'

"*Woman.*—'Did *I* make him a god? Is his worship anything new? He was worshipped as divine long before I came to this place ?'

"*Missionary.*—'I can tell you from the inscription how long he has been here. It is only twenty-two years since he died, and in that short period he has attained to divinity among you. It is an evil work which you do here, and you ought to give it up at once.'

"I came away more depressed at the sight of this idolatrous worship paid to my countryman, than ever I was at

the sight of all other heathen worship put together. A deep sadness weighed down my spirits for many hours, which compelled me to seek the never-failing source of comfort, confidence, and joy."

There are several cases in India in which dead Englishmen are thus worshipped. The departed may be called almost indifferently a god or a devil; the distinction between these two not being by any means essential in the Hindu mind. Offerings are generally made at the tomb; and we are told that, at one place, as the most acceptable oblation to the ghost of our countryman, the natives present spirits and cheroots!

In a letter to the Home Society, Mr Nesbit had occasion to dwell sorrowfully upon Mr Cooper's departure from India; his colleague Mr Stevenson's expected removal from Poona for a season, a sea voyage being deemed indispensable for the recovery of his health; and on repeated attacks of illness, which had considerably weakened himself. Mr Wilson of Bombay had also been seriously ill. Mr Nesbit then proceeds:—

"The account which we have now given of our state and operations, and successes, is calculated to instruct and impress us on many important subjects. But if there is one point to which it directs our attention more than another, it is the greatness of the harvest and the fewness of the labourers. Will not the ministers and students of the Scottish Churches take this into consideration? Can they quietly look on, and see our ranks thinned year after year, without one aspiration of generous feeling on the subject? Are they afraid of toils and privations, sickness and death? If they are, may not God bring them home to them in Scotland as well as in India? . . . . We entreat them to take the case of the ignorant and perishing heathen into

serious and prayerful consideration, and to make that consideration a personal concern."

Yet, though sick, he is both diligent himself, and an attentive spectator of all that is done by others around him. He chronicles symptoms of progress in native society. He thus writes to his brother:—

"..... Newspapers and other periodicals are increasing among the natives in Bombay, as well as at Calcutta. The editor of one of the papers, called the Bombay *Durpun* (Looking Glass), commenced with the professed determination of waving all religious discussion. Two or three numbers, however, had scarcely been published, when the editor himself, under the signature of a correspondent, proposed it as a query—Why, as there were *castes* among animals, there should not also be *castes* among men? This query called forth three answers, which were all published; and from that time to the present day, his paper has never wanted an article, or a query, or a reply, on the subject of religion. All goes on well hitherto, and we watch the progress of the native press with great interest and with no small hope. The natives are not well aware that, in their present undertakings, they are sapping the foundations of their own religion. They will, therefore, go on fearlessly for a time, until they find the walls of their habitation tottering and falling around them .... We predict that this will be the case in Bombay, because we see all that we predict actually take place on the other side of India. We trust, however, that in *this* presidency, false religion will be superseded by Christianity, and not by infidelity. It was, for the most part, a decidedly infidel influence that was exercised over the natives of Calcutta, and the result has been of that melancholy character that might have been expected. Here the great work of illumination has but begun, and we

trust it may enjoy in its progress a decidedly Christian direction, and may issue in the most glorious and happy results. . . . . Many of the educated natives of Calcutta are frantic with infidelity.

"Mr Wilson has been carrying on a controversy with the Pársís in Bombay. The exposure of the falsehood and absurdity of their religion has greatly enraged them; and, in revenge, they have sent for a number of copies of Tom Paine, and, I believe, other infidel works.

"The whole world seems preparing for a keen and general contest between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. Let us up, then, and be in readiness. Let us see that our heart is sound and our sinews strong. Let us have our armour bright, and let us be expert and ready to use it both in aggressive and defensive warfare."

In the close of the year 1832 he writes to his sister:—

"——'s letter of May 1832, reached me yesterday. I may say of his letter, as he said of mine, that the arrival of it has been for a long time past both desired and feared. Six months and more have intervened between this and the previous communication. It is said of the righteous man, that 'he shall not be afraid of evil tidings; because his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' If *Jehovah* comforts us, how should we be disconsolate? If *He* stills our minds, who or what can disturb them?

"Mr Stevenson has been obliged to take a trip to Calcutta for the benefit of his health. He is expected to return in the course of four or five months. With the exception of my ear, which from loud and constant speaking is kept in a state of inflammation and consequent disorder, I enjoy good health.

"Messrs Mitchell and Wilson were here lately on their way to a station in the interior [Jaulna], where a minister of the

gospel has not been for many years, and where a missionary has never been at all. They have chosen their route with a reference both to Europeans and natives. I intend to set off next week on a tour to Sholapore. One of the elders of the Scotch Church at Poona accompanies me part of the way.

"—— was lately baptized by my former fellow-student the Rev. Alexander Duff. 'I am happy to inform you,' writes ——* in a private note addressed to myself, 'that the great cry (against Christianity) which existed among the educated Hindus, has, to a great extent, ceased. They now think Christianity a system which deserves, at least, a serious investigation. I am, night and day, engaged (whenever at home) in conversing with Hindu friends (all sceptics), and endeavouring to expose the same errors which, a year ago, I might myself have been instrumental in fostering.'"

While diligent in doing good, as time allowed, among his own countrymen, Mr Nesbit in no degree intermitted his work among the natives. In addition to the usual evangelistic operations, he prepared this year a second Marathi tract. He writes to a friend at Maulmein, regarding labours of this kind as carried on by himself and some of his colleagues:—

"My Dear —— . . . . Mr Wilson is going on with great energy with his labours in Bombay. His reply to a tract written by a Brahman in defence of Hinduism, has been published, both in English and Marathi. The natives had soon purchased nearly a hundred copies of the Marathi version at (to them) the high price of half a rupee. This fact shews more than any thing else the excitement of the native mind upon the subject. In the midst of this excitement I have prepared for publication, a review, or rather

* The convert referred to above.

exposure, of the Bhuguwut Geeta (Bhagavad Gítá), a part of the Hindu sacred writings, more revered than the Vedas themselves. I trust it may come out opportunely, and have a beneficial effect. Mr Stevenson, too, has translated into Marathi part of the Rig Veda, and intends to expose it to the vulgar gaze in that garb. All these things, if viewed in their true relations and used in their own place, may be blessed to the overturning of superstition, and the establishment of true religion. We see from what has taken place at Calcutta, that mere human learning is sufficient to overthrow Hinduism; but, we see, at the same time, that it is not sufficient to overthrow sin. To those who have abandoned Hinduism, the holy gospel is scarcely more welcome than to those who are yet buried in its errors and pollutions."

The Sanskrit work on which Mr Nesbit had written a critique, is one of the most remarkable products of Hindu mind,—characterised by the greatest metaphysical subtlety, and as a poem, by no little artistic skill. Were Hinduism not a living and active system of delusion, one might regard such a work with that sort of admiration which we extend to the lofty strain of Lucretius in defence of the philosophy of Epicurus. But Hinduism breathes and moves—a foe, of appalling power, to God and goodness,—and the missionary, at all events, has little time to spend in admiring the dignity of the poet's gait, or the elegance with which he adjusts his "singing robes." The Bhagavad Gítá, or *Divine Song*, still exerts a most potent influence; its system of mystic pantheism has wrought itself into the very texture of the Hindu mind, at least in all Western India. Accordingly, Mr Nesbit seems to have put forth his utmost strength in the composition of his work—close thought, inexorable logic, keen irony, indignant appeal,—so that polemically the tract is very formidable. Still it is not

wholly satisfactory. Mr Nesbit's knowledge of Sanskrit, at least in 1832, was hardly sufficient to make him completely master of the work he criticised. He had to trust greatly to the translation of Wilkins, which, though meritorious, is not exact;—the excellent Latin version of A. W. Schlegel was not accessible to him. There is also too much of a pushing to the uttermost every advantage from what the Gítá says, rather than a frank admission of what it means to say. Yet let us not be understood to imply that Mr Nesbit, consciously, was in the least degree unfair in argument;—the pure truthfulness of his character wholly prevented this.

He does not, however, confine himself to a refutation of Hinduism as represented in the Gítá. He contrasts its doctrines and principles with those of Christianity, and the work closes with a brief statement of the way of salvation as revealed in the Gospel.

Mr Nesbit had studied the system of popular Hinduism with great care; and we find him, in the course of 1832, writing several very able papers in a controversy which he and Mr Wilson maintained with the learned Colonel Vans Kennedy. He had published "Strictures" on Kennedy's work on "Ancient and Hindu Mythology," to which the author wrote a reply, which led to a counter reply, and so on. Vans Kennedy unhappily was not a believer in Christianity, and he was, to a most unreasonable extent, the apologist of Hinduism. Even on questions purely antiquarian and literary, many of his views sound strangely in the present day. In the contest with the missionaries he was fairly worsted.

As the native population of Poona was large—being roughly estimated at one hundred thousand—there was abundant work among all classes. The Brahmans especially were numerous and highly influential; and the at-

tention of the mission was naturally directed a good deal to them. As yet nothing had been attempted for their enlightenment, except the feeble effort which the mission had been able to put forth. A Sanskrit college indeed—open to Brahmans solely—had been established by Government in 1821, in which well-paid pundits taught to well-paid scholars the Vedas and Shástras in purest Hindu fashion. Educationally considered, the whole institution was a gross blunder; in fact, Mr Chaplin, the Commissioner of the Deccan, who set it up, admitted that several of the branches of study were "worse than useless;" but then, he deemed it a rare device for pacifying the Brahmans. It did so simply in so far as it enabled them to retain their ill-gotten and disastrous influence; it turned out hosts of men who fed, and traded on, the worst superstitions of the people; and for many years afterwards, throughout all the Maratha country —and in the Maratha states beyond—and indeed throughout most of India, the most bitter opponents of every necessary reform, as even the President of the Educational Board had occasion to remark, were Brahmans educated at the Poona College. Amid such a population the attention of the missionaries was necessarily a good deal directed to the sacred lore of the Hindus.

During the year 1833, the labours of the Mission at Poona were much retarded by the sickness of the missionaries. Mr Stevenson made a voyage to Calcutta, and was absent for several months. Mr Nesbit was laid aside from public speaking, at least from preaching to Europeans. Still he would not give up addresses to natives; and in the commencement of the year he took his projected tour to Sholapore, and beyond it, as far as the Marathi language extended. Mr Stevenson had traversed the same ground two years before; and Mr Nesbit was cheered to find that a good

deal of what he had said was not forgotten. He had also many opportunities of preaching in villages where the joyful sound had never before been heard. For the most part, the people listened with wonder, with interest, and frequently with pleasure. Such, probably, is the experience of most missionaries when the gospel is proclaimed in a village for the first time, and when controversy is, as far as possible, avoided. Another short tour soon followed.

From the failure of the rains in the preceding monsoon, a partial famine prevailed in the districts in which both of these tours were made, and there was no small amount of suffering. The inhabitants were all the more disposed to listen to the missionary, when he exhorted them to turn to the true God. Friends had supplied him with means to make a liberal distribution of alms to the poor. The suffering, however, was by no means so great as has often been experienced in India. Thus, we are told, that of the present Christian converts in the North-west provinces, probably one-half consists of young men and women who, being left orphans in the famine of 1838, were supported and educated by the Missionary Orphan Institution, and subsequently baptised.*

The inflammation in the ear from which he suffered still continued; and public preaching being impossible, translation-work, distribution of tracts, conversation with the natives, and the examination of schools, were the kinds of labour he could engage in.

In the month of May—Mr Stevenson having returned in improved health from Calcutta—Mr Nesbit visited Bombay for medical advice. Several painful operations were performed, and his strength was considerably impaired. He was thus entirely debarred from what he calls his "beloved work" of public preaching, either to natives or Europeans.

* See "Christian Missions in India," by the Rev. R. C. Mather.

He was, however, far from idle. The Bombay Auxiliary Bible Society had resolved on a revision of the Marathi translation of the New Testament, and Mr Nesbit entered with zeal into so important a work. He also aided in the revision of the Marathi publications of the Bombay Tract Society. He presented to the Society this year his third Marathi tract, "The Brahman's Claims." This is a very able production. It elaborately unfolds the greatness of the sacred caste, as set forth in the Hindu books; gives a formidable array of Sanskrit quotations in support of the assertions made; shews their gross absurdity and self-contradictoriness; and contrasts with the monstrous doctrines of the Puranas the majestic verities of the Christian Scriptures. In a number of the *Journal Asiatique* of Paris, we recollect meeting with a notice of this publication by a well-known Orientalist, M. Theodore Pavie, in which high admiration is expressed for the extent and accuracy of knowledge which it displays on the topic discussed.

He could also advance the cause of truth by conversation with natives and superintendence of schools. In a brief Report of the Poona Mission for 1833, we read thus:—

"We have met with little marked success among the heathen. If, in regard to them, the Christian could allow his mind to rest on anything with satisfaction short of true conversion to God, we might have much pleasure in seeing the increase of knowledge among the children, the diminution of prejudice, and increase of free inquiry among the young men, and the thirst for English literature and science which here also begin to exhibit themselves; but although there can be no doubt that all these things will, in the providence of God, be made instrumental in preparing the way for the kingdom of his Son, they are not the ends which we propose to ourselves, nor can they benefit the possessors

of them but by leading them to genuine devotedness to God."

Mr Nesbit remained in Bombay till near the end of the year. He derived considerable benefit from the medical treatment he experienced, and returned with a joyful heart to resume his labours at Poona.

We find Mr Nesbit next engaged on a missionary tour in the villages in the neighbourhood of Poona, to the south. The tour occupied six weeks and a half. He printed his journal in the *Oriental Christian Spectator*, twenty pages of which are occupied with it. The whole of it is interesting, and would well repay perusal. He enters into full details of the conversations he had with natives of all classes, from the inflated Brahman down to the outcast Mhar or Mang. Always close and consecutive himself, he compelled the Hindu disputant to be the same; or, when he wandered, dragged him back to the proper question, till it had been sifted to the uttermost. Skilled to a wonderful degree in Hindu mythology, which he had studied with indomitable perseverance, even in its absurd and wearisome details, he was able to make the most apposite allusions and quotations. As at once an exposition and a refutation of popular Hinduism, his journals are probably unsurpassed.

In 1834 Mr Nesbit devoted a good deal of attention to the study of Sanscrit and Hindustáni. Sanscrit he had already attacked in right good earnest, and with his usual thoroughness, laboriously waded through the intricate Grammar of Wilkins—the simpler works of Professors H. H. Wilson and Monier Williams not being then written. In Hindustani he made sufficient progress to enable him to converse in it with tolerable ease; but he could hardly venture on public preaching in that language. The Musalmans of Poona and the neighbourhood generally speak

Hindustani; but they perfectly comprehend Marathi, in which Mr Nesbit had attained a rare proficiency.

Mr Nesbit's discourses delivered in English on the Lord's day were highly valued by his hearers. Some of his friends requested him to publish a selection of them, relieving him of all pecuniary risk. He accordingly did so; and the work appeared in Bombay, and soon afterwards republished in this country. It is an 8vo volume, entitled "Discourses chiefly on Devotional Subjects." Although it has never been extensively known, the book is one of substantial worth—abounding in strong, pointed statements of truth. It is pleasing to know that it is valued by many of the educated youth of Bombay.

The following very instructive letter was written about the middle of the year.

"Several of our converts have apostatised, and most of them present a meagre specimen of Christianity. Our past experience has taught us to be very careful whom we admit into church fellowship. We have at present five hopeful candidates for baptism in connection with our mission. But the work of awakening and conversion among the natives of India has yet to commence. A drop or two may have fallen; but 'showers of blessing' are hitherto unknown in this part of the world. The latter must be desired more earnestly, and supplicated with more fervency and humility, before we can expect to enjoy them. And yet I have found numerous conversions take place among Europeans, without any extraordinary spirit of prayer being experienced on the part of the preacher through whose ministrations they were brought about. About this time last year I scarcely preached a sermon to the British soldiers without a saving blessing to some one accompanying it; but I felt myself a mere channel for the grace of God, which willed to make use of me whether I willed to convey it or not. My desires

for the conversion of the heathen were, if I mistake not, more ardent than those which I entertained for the conversion of my own countrymen; and my language in addressing the former appeared to me to be as plain and forcible as that I used in addressing the latter; yet the result was lamentably different, no conversion was realised, nor even the slightest awakening produced. God may have a purpose in view in permitting the heathen to be so long addressed in vain; and that purpose may be to shew how utterly depraved a nation becomes, when left to its own inventions and devices for a few generations. The Hindu mind is neither stony ground, nor soil overgrown with thorns, nor a piece of hard-beaten road; it is the bare, dry, flinty rock itself, which is incapable of giving even the promise of a harvest. 'The saints,' however, 'shall take the kingdom under the whole heaven, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever.' They have 'a sharp two-edged sword in their hand,' with it they shall smite the nations, and bring them into subjection to their heavenly King."

It is very evident that the earlier missionaries to Western India had gone out with the hope that God would bless them with speedy and numerous conversions, and that the general standard of Christian life among the baptised would be a high one. But conversions were few, and the behaviour of the converts was often far from satisfactory. Not a few apostatised; of those who maintained a Christian profession, and were believed by the missionaries to be really converted men, many were vacillating and feeble. The missionaries were much tried by these things; the question continually occurred, whether it was not owing to their own unfaithfulness that the truth advanced with such faltering steps. In reading the papers of those good men, one can hardly resist the impression that the spirit sank under such

reflections, and that some of them died of a broken heart. The churches at home did not afford them much comfort. It amounted at most to this, that, as there had been conversions in other places, no doubt the barrenness complained of would pass away, if the means that had been blessed elsewhere, were here faithfully plied. It was for Mr Nesbit himself a providentially opportune occurrence that his labours at Poona had been largely blessed to Europeans; it taught him that the question, why Christianity advanced so slowly, was a large and complex one; and, though it did not lessen his grief on account of heathen unbelief, it relieved him from the crushing fear that his heavenly Master refused to acknowledge his work.

In the course of this year an important change took place in connection with the Mission; it was transferred from the Scottish Missionary Society to the Established Church of Scotland. The Scottish Missionary Society was a body of comprehensive character like the London Missionary Society; it was supported by evangelical Christians of various denominations. It flourished for a considerable time; and, besides the good it accomplished abroad, it powerfully contributed to the promotion of Christian union in Scotland. But two causes ere long led to its decline. A great controversy sprung up in Britain on the question of ecclesiastical establishments. Next, the Church of Scotland and the United Secession Church—the two bodies from which the Society drew its main support—set up missions of their own; the former in 1824, the latter in 1835. From the time the Church of Scotland established its mission in India—Mr Duff having sailed in October 1829, and opened his school in Calcutta in August 1830—the funds of the Society rapidly diminished.

In 1835 the only missionaries of the Scottish Society in

India were Mr James Mitchell, Mr Nesbit, and Mr Wilson: Mr Stevenson had become a chaplain in the service of the East India Company at Bombay. The missionaries made application to the Committee of the Established Church of Scotland to be received as their agents, and the Directors of the Scottish Missionary Society threw no obstacle in the way. The transference was happily effected in August 1835.

Mr Nesbit's health had again given way. The complaint in his ear had been mitigated for a time; but active labour brought it back, and with greater violence than ever. He was compelled again to leave Poona, and spend some months in Bombay towards the end of the year 1834. It was now the decided opinion of his medical advisers, that a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope ought to be tried. Total cessation from labour seemed the great requisite; and *that*, it was evident, could not be obtained in India.

While he remained in Bombay Mr Nesbit finished his fourth Marathi tract, "The Worship of the Elements." It reveals his usual care and extensive knowledge of Hinduism, and is a very useful production, though it has not been quite so popular as the three which have been already noticed.

The following are extracts from his journal on the voyage :—

"*Jan.* 3. 1835.—Sailed from Bombay in the 'Malabar.'

"*Sabbath, Jan.* 4.—Read portions of Scripture and religious periodicals; and instructed and exhorted a number of invalid soldiers, fellow-passengers with myself.

"*Jan.* 6.—Visited new and old Goa, and conversed with Hindus and Romish priests in Marathi and Latin respectively. The Brahmans in New Goa have a temple of Lakshmí or Shaktí, in which they openly perform all the ceremonies of their worship. They understood my Marathi per-

fectly, but were ashamed that they could not answer me except in broken sentences. They are almost all employed in merchandise. I ought not to neglect mentioning that the only temple of the Hindus in this quarter has connected with it a number of low caste men and women of the worst character. I visited the convent of Brahmanical monks connected with the church of St Cajetan. They were very glad to see me, seated me at their table, and offered me wine, brandy, tea, and every sort of sweet-meat. I told them I understood they were formerly Brahmans. 'Brachmanes *sumus*,' was their answer. I then inquired into their habits as to eating and drinking, and into their religious opinions and worship; and found that as to all these things they had nothing of Brahmanism but the name. They knew absolutely nothing of Sanscrit, and were not acquainted with one word of the Gáyatrí.* They got very warm in the course of conversation on the doctrine of justification and other subjects. . . . The priests of the cathedral were engaged in their evening exercise when I visited that church. They went through the service as a school boy would through his task, and they had none to listen to them or unite with them in their prayers and recitations. My only feeling was compassion, coupled with the conviction that these meagre remnants of Romanism will soon be utterly destroyed.

"*Sabbath, Jan.* 11.—Read portions of Scripture and passages of religious works. Preached to the crew and passengers assembled on deck; instructed the invalid soldiers and others in their own quarters, and united in private religious exercises with Christian friends."

On the 16th of February they reached the Cape, where Mr Nesbit received a kind welcome from the Rev. Dr Adamson, minister of the Scotch Church. He thus writes:—

* The holiest text in the Vedas.

"My general health has much improved during the voyage; but the local complaint remains much the same as when I left Bombay. I hope, however, that the great change of climate which I shall here experience will have the effect of restoring the organ to its natural vigour. All things considered, I deemed it expedient to preach at least once every Sabbath on board ship. This necessarily entailed an injury, which, by going into the country, I expect here to avoid. May the gracious Head of the church speedily accomplish my earnest desire of returning to the land of my adoption, and to the scene of my chosen and beloved work!"

Mr Nesbit remained in the Cape colony about a year and a half. He was now in a scene in many respects exceedingly unlike India. He entered with much interest into the objects around him, and appears to have even exerted himself so as to injure his health, or at least delay its re-establishment. He commenced the study of Dutch immediately on his arrival, and steadily carried it on till he was able to deliver public addresses in that language. He travelled into the interior, and seldom lost an opportunity of addressing the colonists and natives on the things that belonged to their peace. This he did at first through an interpreter; afterwards his Dutch rendered him excellent service among the Boers and Hottentots.

The following extracts from a speech delivered by Mr Nesbit at the Cape Town Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society, gives an outline of his employments and impressions:

"I have visited the stations and institutions at Tulbagh. Tuurbrak (Cáledon Institution), Pacaltsdorp, Hankey, Port Elizabeth, Bethelsdorp, Uitenhage, Graham's Town, and Graff-Reinet. I have particularly inspected the various operations carried on at these places, and have seen the practical effects of them. I have mingled freely with the

cause it is holy; acquiesce in it because it is just; and rejoice in it, and be grateful for it, because it is good."

The following contains information which will probably be new to many of our readers. It is eminently suggestive :—

"I have had a good deal to do with the Mohammadans in this place. We have already held ten meetings for controversy; and my intention is to prepare for them a series of tracts which may be put into the hands of those of them that can read. These Mohammadans were once slaves, taken by the Dutch East India Company in the East, and brought to be sold to, and to serve the colonists of the Cape. So ignorant of religion were the Dutch at that time, that they thought it would be a degradation at once to themselves and their religion, were it learned, and believed, and embraced by these poor slaves. Masters have even forbidden them to learn what Christianity was, when the slaves expressed or intimated a desire to do so. Now has come the time of retribution. These slaves are made free; vast numbers of them are becoming richer than their former masters; they are becoming fully as proud as they, and would not inquire into Christianity, were their masters even to entreat them to do so. Mohammadans are even now as numerous as professing Christians in Cape Town; they are the masters of all the lucrative trades; and if the government do not of itself yield to their wishes, they may soon have the power of making it yield. Alas! the blindness of ungodly men, especially of those who wear a 'form of godliness.' Had the Mohammadan slaves been treated and instructed as they ought to have been, many of them would, at this day, have been Christians indeed; and all of them would have been brought under the stated ministrations, and under the indirect influence, of Christianity. All

of them, too, would have been useful citizens, and good subjects, conscientiously and heartily attached to the government under which they were placed."

In connection with the above controversy, Mr Nesbit did prepare a short series of tracts. These were afterwards translated into Hindustání, and published by the Tract Society of Bombay for the benefit of Musalmans in India.

During his residence at the Cape he also published, in English and Dutch, a discourse on Church Discipline.

Mr Nesbit left the Cape in the month of August 1836, and sailed to the Mauritius. He remained in that island for two months, and was much occupied with inquiries into the religious state of the Presbyterian portion of the settlers. These had in many cases sunk into great apathy in regard to spiritual things. Many of them had it not in their power to attend any place of worship; and others, having no minister of their own church, and not relishing the services of the Church of England, had become wholly immersed in the world. Mr Nesbit diligently visited the Scotch residents both in Port Louis and the country districts; and his earnest appeals on the subject of religion were for the most part responded to. Before he left the island, a petition to the Presbytery of Glasgow, praying that a minister might be sent without delay, was drawn out and largely signed. But unhappily, in those days, the church at home was only beginning to awake to any sense of the spiritual destitution of her expatriated children; and several years elapsed before a Presbyterian minister was despatched to the Mauritius.

We have letters before us affectionately testifying to the spiritual good he did among his countrymen in this island.

Mr Nesbit could find no vessel at the Mauritius sailing direct for Bombay, and accordingly took his passage in one bound for Ceylon. He remained in that island only about

a fortnight; but, during that time, discovered the same sad want of the means of grace among his countrymen as he had observed in the Mauritius. He reached Bombay on the 7th Feb. 1837, after an absence of two years and one month. He had a happy meeting with many kind friends, and yet there had been sore breaches made in the small band with which he had been associated. In particular, he felt the death of Mrs Wilson. From the time that her husband and she had been his guests at Hurnee, he had entertained the highest regard for that excellent and gifted woman; and the Mission-house at Bombay seemed now alas! sadly desolate. Mr R. C. Money, of the Civil Service, had also died; and in him the cause of Christ had lost one of its warmest and most energetic supporters. But with an unfaltering, though a chastened and sorrowing heart—"cast down, but not destroyed,"—the missionary resumed his "chosen and beloved work."

CHAPTER VI.

RETURN TO INDIA—WORK AT BOMBAY—ITINERACY.

On his arrival in Bombay, Mr Nesbit learned, for the first time, that the home Committee on Foreign Missions had the question of his being permanently employed as a Missionary at the Cape under consideration. His Christian friends at the Cape, as elsewhere, had already tried to detach him from his loved sphere of labour. On this matter his sense of duty was strong; and his feelings are well brought out in a letter to the Rev. Dr Brunton, Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee.

"*Bombay*, 15*th Feb.* 1837.—Till I reached Bombay I did not hear anything of your making my permanent residence at the Cape a matter of deliberation in your Committee.... I never gave the members of the Scotch Church at Cape Town any reason to expect that I should remain among them as a missionary, even for a limited period. My knowledge of the languages, mythology, customs, and manners, of the Hindus, pointed out India to me as the place where, even with inferior health, and without the capability of public speaking, I was called to labour. India is my own adopted country; I love it as such, and I cannot well describe the mingled feeling of grief and indignation with

which, not only at the Cape, but at Mauritius and Ceylon, I had occasion to listen to proposals to abandon it for ever.

"The Cape will, I trust, become the chosen field of other labourers in connection with our church. In my present state of health I must confine myself to translation, composition, and easy conversation. In these departments I have much more work than I shall ever be able to overtake. I do not despair, at the same time, of recovering my health, so as to resume the most important and efficient part of missionary labour."

The following beautiful letter more fully explains his feelings in connection with missionary work in India :—

"*July* 1837.—My Dear Sister,—Dr Wilson's being alone in Bombay has kept me from returning to Poona, where I was stationed before I went to the Cape, and where I enjoy better health than I do here. The rainy season is particularly trying in the lowlands; and I have not escaped altogether unhurt during the last thirty days. I have been preserved, however, from regular fever, which is a great subject of thankfulness. My prospects with respect to my ear are rather brightening. I abstain from public speaking, and use my voice only in giving more private instructions. This, I think, has been attended with a blessing, and it may perhaps please the Great Physician altogether to restore me. Let me have your prayers, my dear sister, in reference to this point. Are you one of 'the children?' Do you sometimes get very near the Master's presence? Do you feel that you not only touch the hem of His garment, but have a hold of Himself? On such occasions forget not to bring my case forward, and to plead with Him respecting it. I feel myself furnished for usefulness in India by knowledge and habits, which probably more

than half of my successors will die before they acquire, and I long earnestly to have full and free scope to employ all my stores in the illustration and recommendation of the truth. My going to the Cape would involve the sacrifice of unspeakably more than any of those who advise such a step are at all aware of. And what is their main argument? The climate of India does not agree with me! And with whom does it agree? With none that I know. It gives all fever, liver complaint, &c., and makes men and women all pale and withered, and grey-headed, before they have yet attained the meridian of their days. In the midst of all these disadvantages, the gentlemen and ladies connected with the Company's establishment, wade through one ten years after another, looking forward to the glorious issue, a residence in England, blessed with riches, and ease, and honour. But are there not as strong motives in the world as those by which they are actuated? Is there no 'better country' than England? Is there no better gold than India's? Is there no greater bliss than that which India and England combined can furnish? ....

"If our happiness is to consist in an exemption from trials, we shall never be happy in this world at all. Our happiness must consist in being urged by them to seek large supplies of heavenly peace, and joy, and strength, that we may meet and endure and overcome them, that we may be able even to take pleasure and glory in them, because, when we are weak, we are strong, and, when infirmities encompass us, the power of Christ rests upon us. This is our present portion. We shall get nothing different from this till we reach heaven. In your contentions with a rude world, my dear sister, get above it. Be elevated and shielded by a spirit which it can neither touch nor understand. While it rages upon you, pity it, and pray for it. While it accuses

you, commit your cause to Him who judgeth righteously, with as perfect an assurance that He will plead and vindicate it, as if you saw the throne set and the books opened. While it despises and insults you, realise your rank as a daughter of the King of Heaven, and an heir of all heaven's glory and bliss, and be not troubled or cast down by its triumphs. Have you never been in the sanctuary to see its end? And know you not the end of the righteous? Is not their end peace in this world, and shall they not shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father in the world to come? Get victories and deliverances of this kind, and these will be far sweeter, and far more valuable, than an exemption, if such were possible, from all those circumstances wherewith the world may try and distress you. . . .

" Dr Wilson enjoys good health at present. He expects to receive two of his late wife's sisters from home in a short time. They are coming out to superintend female schools."

The expectation expressed in the last paragraph of the above letter was soon afterwards fulfilled in the arrival of the Misses Bayne.

Soon after his arrival in Bombay Mr Nesbit took up his abode in a house within the Fort,—in the same building, in fact, as that in which the General Assembly's Institution was accommodated. Public preaching was still very trying to him, and he refrained from it as much as possible. Revision of the Marathi translation of the Scriptures, teaching in some of the higher classes of the Institution, and conversation with natives who resorted to him at his own house, were his chief employments. From time to time there appeared an article from his pen, on some religious question, thoughtfully and carefully prepared, in the pages of the *Oriental Christian Spectator*. " Disputed with Jews, conversed with Brahmans, and conducted religious exercises

with professing Christians,"—so runs one of the entries in his journal at this time.

In the month of November he was called again to visit the island of Ceylon, with reference to that destitution of religious ordinances which had saddened him during his former brief sojourn there.

To HIS FATHER, December 1837:—

"I mentioned to —— my intention of visiting Ceylon, and I now write to you from the capital of the island. The petition which was sent to the Secretary for the Colonies from the Mauritius, has been most satisfactorily replied to; and from the present appearances of things here, I entertain a confident expectation of a similar success as it respects this island. The Governor has engaged to give us his 'best support,' and the Scotchmen appear prepared to come forward with handsome subscriptions for the erection of a church; so that, before 1838 comes to a close, a minister of the Church of Scotland may be regularly established, and daily labouring among our brother Presbyterians here. May the Great Head of the Church give them a man after his own heart. The mission does not pay my expenses on this occasion. I mentioned the subject to one of the elders of the Scotch Church at Bombay, and he at once agreed to supply all that may be necessary, a sum of £50 or more. Some other friends, however, were happy to share the burden and the blessing with him, so that he had £25 left, as he expressed it, for some similar object. How happy were the first days of Christianity, when God enlarged the hearts of its disciples, when they regarded worldly possessions as comparatively nothing, because they possessed Christ, and in Christ possessed all things. And how happy will the church once more become, when her members, 'knowing in themselves that they have a better and enduring substance,'

shall 'take joyfully the spoliation,' or make joyfully the voluntary surrender of 'all that they have.' Could we compare God with the world, and eternity with time, and see correctly their several proportions, we should have no difficulty in acting thus. We should only stand amazed at that perverseness by which, in many instances, we made God less than the world, and eternity shorter than time."

On the voyage, both going and returning, Mr Nesbit landed at several points, and saw a good deal of the work carried on by the missionaries in that part of India. He particularly mentions Cochin, Quilon, Cottayam, and Coimbatoor. The intercourse he had with the missionaries of the Church of England and the London Missionary Society, greatly refreshed his spirit, and doubtless helped to enlarge his views of missionary economics. Most of the disputes regarding the best modes of evangelistic action in India arise from a too narrow induction of facts. India is a field immensely wide and immensely varied; and it is difficult even for the missionaries themselves to avoid over-haste in their generalizations. Mr Nesbit used to remark with characteristic modesty that he had no enlarged views on missionary action—he just knew to do the work before him. This was perhaps so far true, as he had not read extensively on missions, and possessed but little of constructive power. But at all events, he was the last man in the world to overestimate his own scheme, or condemn a different plan which others were conscientiously pursuing.

Mr Nesbit thus settled down to his duties in Bombay in February 1838; and Dr Wilson had no longer to struggle single-handed with the manifold and increasing requirements of the work. Still, both the missionaries, and the Church at home, felt that the *minimum* of the mission staff in Bombay must be three; and in November Mr Nesbit re-

cords with thankfulness the arrival of a fellow-labourer, the Rev. J. Murray Mitchell.

This year Mr Nesbit became Secretary of a valuable institution, the Bombay Tract and Book Society.

In the month of December he set out on a Missionary tour, which occupied nearly six weeks.

"*Hurnee, 15th and 16th Dec.* 1838.—I left Bombay on the evening of the 14th, and arrived at Hurnee on the afternoon of the next day. I had not seen this, the first station at which I had laboured as a missionary, for upwards of seven years. Its objects presented themselves to me almost as those of a dream. One of the mission-houses was levelled with the ground; and the other was next to deserted, and falling to decay. I naturally repaired to it, and took up my abode in one of its apartments. The associations of the place were sorrowful. I felt them deeply, and made no attempt to evade or to crush them. I stood in the midst of the ruins of the mission, and looked almost in vain for a single trace of its efficiency. It was, however, some consolation to think that persons instructed and baptised here are still members of the church, and bear testimony, it is hoped, to the power of the truth. The present superintendent of the Poor's Asylum is a convert of the mission. An inmate, who was baptised a considerable time ago, is probably now a member of the church in heaven. And there is perhaps generally diffused a respect for the gospel, and a knowledge of its principles, which may prove useful at a future time.

"I spoke with some of my old acquaintance among the natives, and conducted a Marathi service on the Lord's day at the Poor's Asylum. I read the Scriptures to the inmates and others, catechised them on the leading truths of Christianity, and addressed, and prayed with them. Several

Europeans being collected at Hurnee, I had much pleasure in ministering to them also the gospel of Christ."

The following letter to the Misses Bayne, was written on the tour:—

"*Ramghaut, Dec.* 31, 1838.—My Dear Friends,—I wrote to Mr M. Mitchell from Vingorla. That letter may have caused you a measure of anxiety, and I have much pleasure in informing you that we have escaped all the dangers by which we were surrounded. We passed through jungles thickly set with bands of insurgents from the Goa and Waree States; but no one so much as appeared to molest us. In the villages that we passed through, the peaceful inhabitants were in a great panic from an apprehension of an hourly attack from some quarter of the surrounding jungle. I had quietly made up my mind to lose my property, and perhaps to be kept in confinement for a time; but I had no dread of losing my life, though I felt no prospective unwillingness to lose it. When the Lord makes us feel heaven better than earth, the prospect of death is easy and pleasant. Above the ghaut we feel out of the dangers that threatened us below. We have, socially as well as individually, committed our way unto the Lord morning and evening.

"I addressed the natives, and distributed a number of tracts in the bazaar at Vingorla before we started, and yesterday also on the way. I wish I could give you the advantage of sitting with me on a shopkeeper's verandah, without exposing you to all the fatigue of travelling with me. You would mark with the keenest interest all the wonders of a first address,—kindness, surprise, unhingement, delight, and sometimes adoration. A poor Maratha worshipped me yesterday with perfect sincerity. This was very distressing, after all I had said in his hearing, of the

true and living God; but it gave occasion to another explanation and enforcement of divine truth.

"Notwithstanding the religious and philosophical cast of the mind of the natives, I daily receive a deeper and more painful impression of their vast depravity. Their impurity is horribly disgusting, and their falsehood is enough to make a wise man mad. And you, my dear friends, with all your uprightness of mind and delicacy of feeling, are come among this people. You are come here to live in horror, and spend your days in sighs and groaning; you are,—but your sufferings among the wicked Hindus are not so keen as were those of the spotless Saviour among wicked men; and the same "joy that was set before Him" is set before you. You have a rich hope to cherish, and to cheer and uphold yourselves by; a hope rich with blessings, which belong to earth as well as to heaven. I desire to be helpful to you, and you to be helpful to me, in the maintenance of this hope and joy, which alone can still and stay and strengthen our hearts in the midst of the work to which we are called. Jehovah is himself the fountain of good; but there are channels of communication which He has appointed, and which He generally loves to employ."

Mr Nesbit passed through Belgaum, and had pleasant intercourse with the missionaries, Messrs Taylor and Beynon. He writes in his journal :—

"I spent some hours in the examination of the Mission English School, and was well pleased with the result. Owing to great military changes affecting the station, the school appeared to me under a disadvantage. Still it bore good testimony to the careful superintendence of the Missionaries and the diligence of the native teacher, and shewed that their labours had not been in vain. The native teacher just mentioned is a very superior young man. He is by

birth a Hindu, but, from education, possesses both enlarged views and refined feeling. He is teaching his wife to read and write her own language, and desires to possess in her a companion suited to himself in intelligence, taste, and affection."

At the city of Kolapore he make the following important remark :—

" The Brahmans of this place are much less proud than any of the same class and standing I have seen. They are most free in their communications, and appear to entertain no dread of Christianity, or of any argument connected with it. The Brahmans of the Deccan generally, indeed, are much less proud than those of the Konkan, and those towards the south of the Deccan much less proud than those towards the north. This is probably to be accounted for by the variety of opposing sects to be found in the Deccan generally, and particularly in its southern districts. In the Konkan the Brahman reigns with almost monarchial sway. In the Deccan he divides his empire with Jainas, Lingáits, &c., whose pretensions are nearly as formidable as his own. The inhabitants of Kolapore remembered well the visit paid to them by Dr Wilson and Mr Mitchell five years ago."

To THE MISSES BAYNE.

" *Kolapore, 4th Jan.* 1839.—I had a 'long letter' addressed to you ready for the post, and expected to have forwarded it yesterday, when the rearward of my cavalcade with whom it was, were robbed of all that the thieves chose to lay their hands on. I happily recovered my table, in the drawer of which were some of my most valuable manuscripts, but ——'s present with the letter inside could not be found. . . . . I deeply felt my heart's waywardness yesterday, when I had the prospect before me of losing the greater part of my lately composed sermons. I found I had

not fully 'forsaken' them, Luke xiv. 33. . . . . The Raja of this place has sent me supplies, and I have let him know that I am willing to visit him this afternoon, but I have not yet received his answer. My visit, however, will be rather to his relative, who stands in the place of guardian or regent, than to himself, as he is only nine years old. His father died a few weeks ago."

"*Shirwal*, 11*th Jan.*—I had visited this place, and spent a day in it, five years before. But, strange to say, I neither recognised the road to it nor from it, nor the place itself. I searched for some trace of association between the present and the past, but could find not so much as one; and, had not my journal recorded the fact, and the villagers borne witness to it, I should not have had the slightest idea that I had ever seen the village or spoken with any of its inhabitants. They distinctly remembered having seen me, and recounted with accuracy what I had noted down in my journal; but I remembered nothing of these things myself. In India the mind seems to lose much of the power both of receiving and retaining impression. At least I find it most unquestionably the case with myself. I felt a vast difference in this respect while I remained at the Cape of Good Hope in 1835–36. Impressions which India had buried arose again as if from the dead, and often surprised me with their united freshness and antiquity. In England, I have no doubt, I should have experienced still more of these wonders. Here I have to lament the power of memory laid almost prostrate, and fear that the other faculties of the mind are also in a great measure impaired. Still my affections cleave to this the land of my adoption; and I would much rather live here with half my powers, than in the land of my birth with all of them in the fulness of their vigour.

"I preached at two different places in the village. I had no stormy Brahman to encounter, as I had had five years before. All listened with seeming attention and respect, and gave a ready, if not an intelligent, assent to all that I said. Books were gladly received.

"*Poona, 12th to 21st Jan.*—It is upwards of four years since I left this station to go to the Cape. I was rejoiced to find the mission prospering under the care of Mr Mitchell. The English school presented a new feature in its operations. I had much gratification in inspecting its arrangements, and examining its pupils. The native members of the church had much increased; and I greatly enjoyed the privilege of ministering to them in Mr Mitchell's absence. On the Lord's day the native congregation was very large. It was composed of converts, servants, inmates of the Poor's Asylum, teachers of schools, pupils, and strangers. I have seldom spoken with so much freedom and delight to any congregatiou as I did to them."

To the Misses Bayne.

"*10th Jan.*—I ascertained that it was in vain to ask the Resident at Satárá for leave to visit his highness the Prince, or to preach in the native town. I therefore confined my labours to the English part of the district, in which I had the opportunity of speaking till I was tired, and of distributing a number of books. Those distributed by Dr Wilson and Mr Mitchell five years ago, were all collected by the Brahmans and ——, but here my information stops. Whatever became of them, however, we must still proceed in the same work, and renew our hopes though dying, and increase our efforts though all apparently frustrated.

"I have had a great deal of star-gazing since I left you. I have been up almost every morning at two or three for some time past, and the hours before daybreak pass pleas-

antly and peacefully away among the stars. . . . . The contemplation of the heavens served to soften, though not to remove, the sorrow in which I spent my last day in Bombay, and with which I left it. The scenes at Hurnee again deepened my sadness, and my only relief was in prayer, and in the declaration of the blessed word. I was surprised to receive no account at Satara of Miss Reid's arrival.* It is a very responsible position you hold in reference to her. You have to encourage and support and help her, not merely by words or by your example, but by your unstudied expression of feeling and purpose in your whole deportment. If you do not manifest yourself to be a sacrifice, will she sacrifice herself? If you cannot learn the language, will she learn it? If you cannot bear up against all the evils and horrors of a residence among the heathen, will she bear up against them?

"The other day I witnessed the washing and wiping and dressing and adorning of a few stone images. The sight had a strange effect on me, familiarised as I am with idolatry. I thought that if you had been with me, you would have fainted at the horrid spectacle. Are you then to see no such spectacles? No, you are to faint and revive again,—to shudder at the poor Hindus, and yearn in pity over them,—to desire an escape from them into heaven, and yet to prefer a long residence among them on the earth. Oh! what a blessed thing it would be to have our hearts always overflowing with love and pity to all, even the worst around us, and to speak and act naturally and easily and constantly under the influence of these powerful feelings."

To Miss H. Bayne.

"*Bombay, Feb.* 1839.—My Dear Friend,—I have read

* Miss Reid arrived early in 1839. She was sent out by the Edinburgh Ladies' Association for the Promotion of Female Education in India.

your beloved friend's letter, and am cheered with the view it presents of the enjoyments of a sanctified spirit. 'God is love.' 'He rests in his love.' 'He rejoices with joy over' the people of his love. If, then, love is the supreme satisfaction and joy even of the Divine mind, what happiness can we possess without it? and if our love is fixed appropriately on appropriate objects, what happiness may we not possess with it? 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' The heart rejoices to see so much of this element of blessedness in others, and it longs to possess more of it itself. I have got but a glimpse of the meaning of the sentiment expressed by the beloved disciple. I desire to have its full blaze entering into and pervading my heart. Oh! that we could love as we have been loved. It is but reasonable to do so, and the highest reason is here the highest bliss. Your friend's tender and affectionate heart reflects much of the love of God. Her society must have been very precious to you. What a consolation to have the prayers of such a saint! You have them chiefly in connection with your present position. May her prayers not be answering even now?"

To the Same.

"It is indeed 'far better to be with Christ' than to be here. Yet generosity will dictate a desire to 'abide and continue for the furtherance and joy and faith' of His people, whether already called or to be called. It would be 'far better' to live in millennial days than these; but heroism chooses the conflict, and wounds, and mortal struggles of the evil day that ushers the millennium in. We must first suffer and then enter into glory; and if our afflictions work out for us 'a far more exceeding weight of glory,' we are highly privileged in our afflictions. . . . . Nothing abases me more

than the almost illimitable distance between my views and my attainments."

To THE SAME.

"'The winter is past. The rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth. The time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.' If these words are suitable to express the language of an affection between one human being and another, and if even in that reference they convey such a feeling of buoyancy and delight to the heart, how ought it to transport our souls to think that these expressions and experiences are but the shadowings forth of a still higher and intenser affection of which we have begun to enjoy only the smallest participation. . . . . What will it be to enjoy the same love with which God regards his infinite Son! What will it be to return it! If even the peace of God 'passeth all understanding,' what shall we say of His love? Language forbids us to say any thing more than that it also is incomprehensible; it 'passeth knowledge.' This, I think, refers rather to the now inconceivable heights of knowledge and enjoyment and glory we shall reach, than to any new relation in which we shall stand to God. These heights how high! and yet we shall reach them one after another, and when we have reached them, we shall still say, 'we know not yet what we shall be,' for still loftier heights appear above us, and invite our ascent. Our hearts now faint and fail even under these conceptions; but they will not do so then, under the experience of a thousand fold more than we can conceive. My own mind for a moment seeks relief in unconsciousness; but then it will be always delightfully conscious under the fullest and intensest feeling."

CHAPTER VII.

REINFORCEMENT OF MISSIONS—PROGRESS OF ENGLISH—HIS MARRIAGE—ITINERACY—HIS WIFE'S ILLNESS.

About this time all the Missions in Western India received an accession of strength.

In connection with the Church of England, Mr George Candy was ordained, in 1838, to labour among the Indo-British population of the island. Two boarding-schools, one for boys and one for girls, were soon established; and under Mr Candy's diligent superintendence, the "Indo-British Institution" soon became an important agency among that far from unimportant class indicated by the name. The Church Missionary Society sent out the Rev. G. M. Valentine in the same year; and the Rev. J. S. S. Robertson, of the same Society, arrived early in 1839.

About the middle of this year the American Mission also received three additional labourers, two of whom joined the branch of the Mission in the Deccan, while one, the Rev. R. W. Hume, remained in Bombay.

About the same time the London Missionary Society, then the only Society labouring in the province of Gujarat, received a reinforcement of two labourers—the Rev. Messrs Flower and Clarkson.

These arrivals seemed to indicate that the Churches and Missionary Societies of Britain were beginning to under-

stand the claims of Western India. Hitherto these had been grievously overlooked. The Christians in England said—at least such was the language of their acts—"Shew us great results, and we will send you help." The few and fainting labourers replied, that in a new field the help was necessary to effect the great results; but the plea had been overruled.

The amount of reinforcements sent, however inadequate to the exigencies of Western India, yet enabled the various Missions to strengthen and advance their posts. For one thing, there was progress made in the communication of higher education through the medium of the English language.

We have already glanced at the feeble beginnings of the study of English in the Western Presidency. The next step was taken by the Government, which established an English school in 1824. It had tolerable success. In 1832 a number of gentlemen in Bombay, greatly dissatisfied with its constitution, which excluded religious instruction, applied to the Scottish Missionary Society for a missionary, who should devote his time to the special work of conveying instruction through the medium of English. Although these gentlemen subscribed liberally to aid in the matter, the Society, in the declining state of its funds, could not accept the offer. But a Christian English school was organized by Mr Wilson in 1832.* A similar school was established by

* "The English School in the Mission premises was established by some pious gentlemen in Bombay, who were desirous of promoting the improvement of the natives, and who, with this view, resolved to establish an English School, to be conducted according to the best European system, and to embrace the different subjects of instruction which are commonly taught in the schools in Britain. Such an institution is considered of great importance, as a means of communicating Christian instruction to the children of the more respectable and influential class of the natives. . . . . Mr Wilson undertook to organize and superintend this school."—(Report, Scottish Missionary Society, 1833, p. 17.)

Mr Stevenson the same year in Poona, and "Hindus of all classes seemed highly to prize the opportunity it afforded them of becoming acquainted with our language." After some months this school was handed over to the Government; but for a considerable time religious instruction was still communicated in its classes; and Mr Stevenson himself taught in it, at the special request of the Governor, Lord Clare.

The importance of English became more and more manifest. The great success of the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta, commenced by Dr Duff in 1830, had arrested the attention of Christians both in India and at home.

On the death of Mr Robert Cotton Money, early in 1835, a large sum had been subscribed by his numerous friends, for the purpose of commemorating a man of such rare Christian excellence; and it was agreed that an Institution, to be called by his name, should be founded in connection with the Church of England, in which education should be given in English. It was to carry on this institution that Messrs Valentine and Robertson (who have been already referred to) were stationed in Bombay.

The return of Mr Nesbit from the Cape, in the commencement of 1838, and the arrival of Mr Murray Mitchell in the end of the same year, enabled the Scottish Mission to establish the "General Assembly's Institution" on a broader basis than had yet been practicable. All the missionaries shared in the religious instruction imparted; the other branches of study in the higher classes were divided amongst them.

This mode of missionary activity was unlike all that Mr Nesbit had yet engaged in. For himself he had not chosen it; but he could with a good conscience take it up. He

saw the necessity of occupying the great cities with strong Missions; the immense importance of the English language in Indian education he also clearly recognised. He deeply deplored the fearful consequences which he believed must arise from that flood of educated infidelity which Government seminaries were beginning to pour forth; and he believed that, at all events, *some* Missions ought to be largely educational, labouring to give a thoroughly Christian training to those interesting youth on whom, for weal or woe, so much of India's future depends. Even in 1838, then, he could heartily and joyfully adopt this line of missionary action; and his persuasion of the importance of such Christian seminaries in evangelistic effort only deepened with increasing experience. "Some of our friends," he remarked, "are disposed to say we are professors, not missionaries; but this great work must be done, and our Mission is evidently one of those that must grapple with it."

Our readers may remember that Mr Nesbit had originally believed that he might be able to do little good as a preacher, and had rather thought of translation and teaching as his future occupations. He had become a very effective preacher, but certainly was not less so as a teacher. He did not travel over much ground; but what he did, he did most thoroughly. In English literature he delighted to take some Christian classic, such as Milton or Cowper, and carefully analyse every sentiment, almost every expression,—expounding, questioning, with wonderful energy all round, till every student thoroughly comprehended and *felt* the meaning, and every eye beamed with sympathy. Striking, startling, paradoxical in his way of putting things, he compelled the attention of the most listless; and his questions, generally following each other in quick succession, set every mind a working. The students were encouraged

to ask any question they pleased, and they often availed themselves of the privilege. For young men at the stage of advancement at which his pupils generally were, there could not be a better mental discipline than all this. Especially in expounding the word of God, whether to the upper or lower classes, Mr Nesbit's whole mind and heart were constantly called forth, and his face glowed with repressed yet irrepressible emotion.

The attendance at the General Assembly's Institution was encouraging.* It is remarkable that so many as two hundred were speedily in attendance. These were composed of all castes and classes—the astonishing multitude of races which distinguishes Bombay being, to some extent, exhibited here; but the Parsis composed the larger portion.

The first baptisms in connection with the Institution took place in May 1839, when Hormazdji Pestonji and Dhanjibhai Nauroji were received into the Christian church. How much these young men owed to Mr Nesbit's faithful instructions and holy example, will be learned from their own affectionate tribute to his memory in the Appendix. The excitement in the native community was immense. The Parsis, a rich and influential portion of the community, deemed the defection of two of their number from the faith of Zoroaster an indelible stigma on their race. The Hindus and Musulmans took part with the Parsis; and in all the native newspapers the foulest abuse was heaped on the

* Its difficulties were many. The demand for English education, although increasing, was still not very great in Bombay. Then, the Government Institution had, to natives, many recommendations over the Mission Seminary. The former excluded all the lowest castes. In addition to the prestige of Government patronage, it had a long list of scholarships or bursaries to enable deserving students to continue at their studies, whereas the Mission Seminary had then not one scholarship.

Unlike the Hindu College in Calcutta, the Government Seminary exacted only a very low fee, or, in many cases, none at all.

neads of the converts and the missionaries. Legal proceedings were instituted against Dr Wilson, with a view to obtain possession of the converts ; and at the time of the trial the excitement was such that the military were called out to afford protection to the young men. The decision of Sir John Awdry, the Judge, in the case of the younger convert, aged sixteen and a half—which alone was tried—was that he was at liberty to go where he pleased. A petition was next presented to the Governor in Council, with the request that it should be forwarded to the Governor-General, calling for the most unjust restrictions on missionaries, and penalties on converts, which was signed by upwards of two thousand of the native community, including all the leading men. The authorities declined to interfere.

The Mission Institution was almost annihilated. Every Parsi pupil was instantly withdrawn, and the "Punchayet," —an oligarchy, composed of the chief men of the tribe— denounced expulsion from the Parsi community as the inevitable consequence to any parent or guardian who dared to send a child to any school which was superintended by missionaries, or in which the Bible was read. The other classes also took the alarm ; and from two hundred and sixty the attendance fell at once to about fifty, among whom there was hardly a Hindu or Musalman—nearly all the remnant being either Christians or Israelites. Slowly, ere long, the Hindu element of the school began to reappear; but with singular tenacity of purpose the Punchayet still allowed no Parsi pupil to attend. All the operations of the mission were powerfully affected by this event. The missionaries had cultivated acquaintance with the pupils of the Government Seminary, who came out in large numbers to their lectures and evening classes. For a considerable time this intercourse almost entirely ceased. The vernacular

schools sunk to a very low ebb. The shock, in fact, came with the violence of an earthquake; and much that had been toilsomely built up, was in a moment levelled with the ground. So that, in the temper of the native community at that time, the success of the mission seemed to involve its destruction. These things were exceedingly trying to the missionaries; but the path of duty was plain,—they must watch for opportunities of usefulness, and look to God to supply them.

In the month of June an event took place which was of the highest importance in Mr Nesbit's history—his marriage with Miss Hay Bayne. This was a union in every way fitted to promote both his happiness and his usefulness.

It is interesting to note the alteration of Mr Nesbit's sentiments in reference to marriage. When he first came to India, although he does not seem to have formed any resolution on the subject, it is evident he thought that, for him as a missionary, and indeed for most missionaries, it was better to remain single. As an unmarried man he thought he could, with less distraction, surrender himself wholly to his great calling. Then, the support, the sympathy which others sought in the marriage relation, he believed he needed not; it seemed to him like a distrust in the all-sufficiency of Divine strength and consolation to care for it. Gradually, however, these views had changed. Tracing, in unpretending verse, his mental history from the time of his conversion, he thus expresses himself (the lines were apparently written in 1839):—

"My soul appeared to soar beyond the earth,
And earth's dependencies,—Heaven's love was felt,
And I could draw direct from thence, and feel
No want. The earthly channels to convey
The heavenly fountain's waters to the soul

I needed not,—alas! I knew not then
My heart's necessities."

Of these "necessities" he had now been aware for a considerable time. Yet, naturally reserved, he had very few intimate friends; and his "hermit spirit" dwelt sadly in its secluded cell. Ill health had long tried him,—the trials of missionary life and the slow progress of the gospel he had keenly felt; and "all these things were against him." A fear might have been entertained in 1837—probably was entertained—that with all his devotedness and attainments, in consequence of failing health and spirits, Mr Nesbit's usefulness might be permanently impaired. The arrival of Misses Anna and Hay Bayne in the middle of 1837 was an event of much consequence to the mission. It was so to their bereaved brother Dr Wilson; and it was not less so to Mr Nesbit. Both of these ladies were of high natural endowments; and their minds had been very carefully cultivated. Their reading, in English literature at least, was extensive; and their taste discriminative and just. Each had a good deal of the poetic element; in the younger it was more ardent and impassioned, in the elder it exhibited itself in a quiet but deep delight in every form of beauty and every tone of harmony. Above all, both were women of devoted piety; and both had been chastened and refined in the school of affliction, for in a large and most loving family circle many breaches had been made, some of them attended with circumstances of peculiar sorrow.

For the sake of their lamented sister Mrs Wilson, Mr Nesbit was prepared, before their arrival, to welcome the Misses Bayne with all kindness and interest. He speedily found in them minds which, though in several points different in constitution from his own, were thoroughly congenial on the highest and best; and a warm friendship was

formed between him and the sisters. Even from the first the sunshine of their society is manifest in his letters. Towards the younger his friendship gradually deepened into love. We do not mean to trace the growth of this attachment, interesting, and far from unprofitable, though it might be to do so. We have already noted that the marriage took place in the month of June. Very few have entered into the exalted views of the Apostle regarding the conjugal relation more fully than Mr Nesbit,—very few have loved more intensely, and none perhaps have better known

"To form for Heaven
Each passionate wish and dream to dear affection given."

A few days after his marriage, Mr Nesbit writes to Miss Anna Bayne:—

"*July* 1. 1839.—Our love to God is not diminished but greatly increased. I believe we had yesterday as captivating and endearing views of Christ, both in single contemplation and in united conversation and prayer, as we have had for many months past; and every day our thoughts, and feelings, and desires, and purposes towards God, are borne up on stronger, and yet stronger, wing. We desire more than ever to consecrate ourselves to the Lord, and to occupy the station in which He has placed us, to the manifest glory of His name. . . . . Will you get a variety of Gujarati tracts and portions of Scripture to send out to me by the bearer? This is a great resting-place for Párśís and others, who know the Gujarátí language."

He had thus scarcely interrupted his missionary labours. He writes to Mr M. Mitchell:—

"*Mahim, July* 5. 1839.—We are much gratified by your kind and tender letter. . . . . I find many opportunities of missionary usefulness here, and am restored to our old iti-

nerating system which we pursued at Hurnee and Bankote. In Bombay the spirit of the system would be better followed out by preaching bungalows conveniently situated. What dreadful blasphemy I find in almost every company of Hindus! 'It is God that makes us sin,' is a sentiment which they not only fondly cherish, but fearlessly express. When will God's creatures which he has made, and which he daily feeds, and comforts, and blesses, when will they cease speaking evil of Him, and insulting Him even to His face? You, my dear brother, are embarked on the grand enterprise of meeting and subduing the great enemy of impiety that stalks abroad throughout India. Let us join with each other, and cheer and aid each other, in the conflict; and, above all, let us join with Him who was 'manifested to destroy the works of the devil.' He will certainly accomplish the object of His manifestation."

He writes to his relatives :—

"*Bombay, Aug.* 1.—My Dear Father, and Brothers, and Sisters,—Our marriage took place as contemplated on the 25th of June.

"We remained at Mahim, a village eight miles distant from the Fort of Bombay, for about a fortnight after our marriage. There, excepting that of natives whom we visited and addressed, we had no society but our own. My wife delighted to send me into the market-place to preach, joining with me in prayer before I went out, and welcoming me with much love when I came in. I feel it the greatest comfort in the world to have her to sympathise with me in my prayers. I have had more sensible communion with God, and more fervent longings after His presence and grace, in union with her as a fellow-suppliant, than I ever enjoyed with any one else. This is, of course, only as it should be; but what cause of thankfulness have I that it is so! I

might have got a wife who could not fully sympathise with me, or whom I could rather pray for, than pray with. In the present case the *with* far excels the *for*. The presence of my beloved seems freely to open the fountains of my heart, so that love to God, and longings for God, flow out in streams more abundant than ever. . . . . People talk of a month of peculiar happiness enjoyed by the newly married pair. Our happiness seems to have no connection with the moon. She has waned; but our love has only increased. She has disappeared; but our love beams only brighter. I never understood how it could be otherwise in a love formed on right principles, and blessed with a suitable object. If 'marriages are made in heaven,' they ought certainly all to be made for heaven, and to point to heaven. If we marry for this world, and not for the next, our connections are earthly, and must have all the darkness and misery of earth attached to them. But if we marry for the next, we may expect, through the grace of the God of heaven, that heaven's light will beam upon and pervade the union. . . . . My beloved unites with me in the warmest expressions of regard to you all; and we both desire and earnestly request a constant and deeply felt interest in your prayers. We now need them more than ever."

During the next three or four months nothing of special importance occurred in connection either with Mr Nesbit or the mission.

He set out on a missionary tour in the month of December, accompanied by Mrs Nesbit. This was one of the longest itineracies he ever undertook—extending to about three months. He proceeded past Bankote to Mahabuleshwar, Satara, Poona, Ahmednuggur, Aurungabad, Malegaum, Nasik, Tanna, and so back to Bombay. We quote a few passages from his record of this journey:—

"In sailing up the Bankote river, the Sávitrí, we could not help contrasting the exquisite beauty of nature, and the peaceful aspect of dwellings surrounded and shaded with lofty and wide-spreading trees that never lose their verdure, with the known depravity, moral deformity, disquiet, and wretchedness of those for whom they stood, and upon whom they smiled. We were naturally led to read the 104th Psalm, and afterwards poured out our hearts before the God of nature and the God of grace. In the former relation we beheld Him above and around us: "His glory covered the heavens; the earth was full of His praise.' And, in the latter relation, we desired to see Him as gloriously manifested. The bright sun was succeeded by the milder stars; and we trust it was in the spirit of obedience to the word of 'the Holy One'—'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these, who bringeth out their hosts by number; He calleth them all by names; by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth' —that we rose from our cabin, and surveyed the heavens, and gathered from them confidence in Him who 'giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might increaseth strength'—who comforts mourning Israel with the very displays of His majesty and might, and unsearchable wisdom—and who says to Him, when longing for the manifestation of his God, 'The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for Jehovah's mouth hath spoken it.'

"*Poladpore, 27th Oct.*—In the evening we visited the tomb of the Rev. Donald Mitchell, the first missionary of the Scottish Missionary Society to India. He chose the villages on the Bankote river as the scene of his labours; and now he rests in peace on the river's bank, in the immediate neighbourhood of one of them. The scene is ex-

quisitely beautiful; and the undulating hills, the winding river, and the grove of tall and wide-spreading mango-trees, covering with their peaceful shade 'The Missionary's Grave,' would form a most touching picture. We saw and felt the reality, and, I trust, derived from it much spiritual benefit.

"*Par*, 28*th Oct.*—We left Poladpore, between three and four in the morning. The cloudless moon, the morning star spreading and blazing with almost a moon's light, the bright Sirius, and Canopus almost equal in brightness; these, with a thousand lesser luminaries, both gladdened our eyes and guided our path. The sun rose a little after six, when we had commenced the ascent of the mountainous range which forms the base of the Mahabuleshwar hills. We saw his glory gilding the tops of the mountains, and covering all the low country beneath us; but none of his direct rays reached us till we gained the summit of the range; and this we did not accomplish till about eight o'clock. On the summit, in one of the valleys of its undulating surface, is situated the small village of Par. Small as it is, however, it has many temples; and, before it was enlarged by the great traffic of late years, the houses of gods in it must have been nearly, or altogether, as numerous as the houses of men. It is by rivers and on mountains, where, in peculiar beauty and grandeur, God displays Himself, that the Hindu chiefly dishonours and denies Him. It is there especially that he worships men, and beasts, and creeping things. The object of worship in the temple that sheltered us was not even one of these; but an object still more degraded than them all. Surrounded with idols and idol-temples, we felt ourselves, in a peculiar manner, shut up unto the true, and living, and holy God; we blessed Him for the knowledge of Himself which He had given us; we

grieved over the willing ignorance of His nature and character among the people around us; we were touched with the dishonour done to a Father's name, and pleaded His promise to make himself known to all, and fill the whole earth with His glory.

"*Malcolmpeth, 29th Oct. to 26th Nov.*—We ascended the Mahabuleshwar heights on the afternoon of the same day that we reached Par. The scenery grew in grandeur as we advanced. We saw mountain towering above mountain, a profusion of hills scattered at their feet, the low and undulating land of the Konkan stretching far away towards the sea, and the sea itself glowing with the richest splendour under the rays of the declining sun. We saw these in a variety of aspects, and often could not help expressing our admiration aloud, and calling upon each other to share in the pleasing oppression of our feelings. At one particular part of the ascent, I alighted from my horse, and Mrs N. left her palankeen, that, from the corner of a high and fearful precipice, we might gaze upon the magnificence and beauty of the scene. The bearers of the palankeen saw us looking above, around, and below us, and gazed both at us, and at the objects of our admiration. Mrs N. asked them whether they did not admire what was presented to their view. They answered rather coolly that they did. I then tried to point out to them the greatness of the divine workmanship before them, and to lead them to the conception of Him who must be transcendently greater than all his works. 'How, after looking on these great works of God, and in their greatness beholding His, can you possibly turn to a piece of wood or stone, and fall down and worship it?"

"On Sabbath the 3d of November, I had one service in English, and two in Marathi. One of those in Marathi was the administration of the Lord's Supper to the Native

church under the pastoral care of the Rev. A. Graves, of the American Mission. I read to them the 20th chapter of Matthew, and addressed them on that passage, at all times affecting, but more particularly affecting when illustrated by the symbols spread on the communion table, 'The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' Of the communicants three were American, two British, one Portuguese, two Hindu, and four Chinese. We could not help referring to this on the evening of the next day, the first Monday of the month, when we read the 49th chapter of Isaiah, and saw what we conceived to be the flocking of the millions of China to the church: 'Behold, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of *Sinim*.' All the girls of Mrs Graves's school attended on the Lord's day, and some of them also on Monday evening. On the former occasion they sung Marathi hymns, and on the latter English. I was delighted with their singing on both occasions, and am at a loss to say which, as mere singing, pleased me most. But certainly to find the Marathi language moulded into the praises of the true God, and Marathi voices sweetly tuned to sing them, was still more delightful than to hear the voices of strangers celebrating the praises of our own God in our own tongue. At our prayer-meeting in the mission-house on Monday evening, we were cheered with the intelligence of the revivals of religion among professing Christians in Scotland, and the spread of Christianity among the heathen population of the Sandwich Islands.

"Next day I visited Mrs Graves's boarding-school for native females, and heard them go through their usual exercises. They read a portion of the Gospel by John in Marathi, and, in answer to questions put to them on that and other parts

of Scripture, displayed an extensive and correct knowledge of its truths. They read English well, and parsed it wonderfully; and their proficiency in writing, arithmetic, and geography, was most commendable.

" On the 21st we visited Elphinstone Point. We had no sooner reached the limit to which our conveyances could bear us, than we descended to the edge of the precipice, whence the finest and grandest prospect is enjoyed. The many and magnificent mountains to the left, reposing in calm dignity in the distance; the towering cliffs frowning in immediate proximity on the right, and ready, as it were, to rush down into the vast semi-circular hollow between their own lofty tops, and the low vale of the Savitri; the river itself in front running through the plain as a white thread, and every field, and clump of trees, appearing with a combined distinctness and minuteness that give an impression at once of distance and connection that is strangely overpowering,—these were the main features of a scene which we felt surpassed in grandeur any thing we had ever beheld. The undulating hills of the Konkan,—the Savitri circling around them in her way to the sea, and appearing once and again in broad sheets of lucent water,—the waters of the sea itself, visible beyond them all, and glittering like a vast expanse of molten gold under the beams of the declining sun, added beauty to magnificence, and called forth the intensest admiration and awe. I may transcribe the following language as expressive of my own views and feelings :—

[*From Mrs Nesbit's Journal.*]

" ' The view from the Point is very striking; and the first attitude and mood which nature herself almost dictates, are subdued astonishment and " expressive silence." The whole being is, as it were, filled with the vast, the sublime; and, from the magnitude of the scenes, the soul feels intensely a corresponding greatness and elevation, and not only rises in her aspirings, but stretches herself forward, and

ardently pants after infinity. And where is this infinity to be found? "The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me." And assuredly thus we shall ever find that nought on earth below, or even in heaven above, can satisfy the desires implanted in our original constitution, of an all-sufficient, an infinite portion, save God alone. Yes, true, immutably true it is that only the unchangeable, the eternal, the infinite Jehovah, the great "I am," can be to the soul, "made in His image, after His likeness," such an inheritance, not only commensurate with its eternity, but with its nature, and powers, and feelings, formed as they are for infinite progression and infinite enlargement. Well may we then exclaim with the poet—

> "Thou art of all thy gifts Thyself the crown:
> Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor;
> But with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

And oh! how does it enhance our enjoyment of all the grandeur and loveliness spread around us, when we view them as reflections of His uncreated splendour, beamings forth of His unsullied glory, and bright attestations to His power, which is almighty; to His wisdom, which is unerring; to His goodness, which is boundless; and to His truth and faithfulness, which, even when this earth and these heavens shall have passed away, will remain stable and for ever sure.

"'Such, I trust, were, in a measure, our feelings, as we stood on Elphinstone Point; and, with heaving hearts, drank in, with deep delight, the grandeur and magnificence of the scene. The mountains seem scattered around in majestic profusion, their undulating tops sweeping along like the resistless waves of the mighty ocean; one part seen in all the deep solemnity of a dark but rich and living green; other parts again smiling and dazzling under the radiant beams of a glowing tropical sun; above, towering peaks, and frowning ramparts; below, deep ravines; and lower still, peaceful-looking valleys. Such is the varied scene before you, at once awful in grandeur, and yet in perfect accordance with all that is touching and tender in beauty. . . .

"'On our return home we visited Mahabuleshwar, which is quite a Brahmanical stronghold. Mr N. wished both to shew me the temple, and to have an opportunity of addressing the inhabitants of the village, and leaving among them, in the form of tracts, the knowledge of the only name whereby they can be saved. But what shall I say, or how shall I give a true representation of the scene that presented itself shortly after we entered the court of the temple? For it is not only words that fail me, but my very heart almost dies within me; and more than ever do I feel the force of the Psalmist's words, in their

penetrating power and significancy of meaning, when he exclaims, "Horror hath taken hold of me because of the wicked that forsake thy law." "Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me." "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law."

"'Nature, in her mountain solitudes, all so grand and yet so peaceful, reflecting, as they best could, and, in despite of the blight that sin has brought upon them, the perfections of their Creator; but man! man created a reasonable, a moral, and an accountable being—formed for the high and glorious purpose of shewing forth the praises of Him who alone is "his life and the length of his days," "in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being," and the everlasting enjoyment of whom is that being's object and end—degraded from his high estate, defiled with evil passion, and reflecting not the glory of God, but his own foul shame; a monument of divine goodness and sparing mercy, but fearfully "despising the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, and treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath, and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" not knowing that "the goodness of God" is given for the gracious purpose, and ought with him to secure the blessed result, of "leading to repentance."

"'It was a scene indeed deeply agonising and heart-rending; but yet I feel it is almost necessary sometimes to be brought into contact with such scenes. Sitting at ease "under our own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid," we are too apt to forget, or, at least, not to remember with that vividness of impression which the case so justly demands, that millions, brethren and sisters of our race, are living, and oh! not only so, but (I tremble while I write it) dying, "without God," and consequently "without hope," "that blessed hope," which, beaming from Him who is "the Sun of Righteousness," alone has power to gild, with light and glory, either the dark passages of life, or the darker valley of the shadow of death.'

"*Ahmednuggur*, 14*th to* 17*th Dec.*—I had much pleasure in 'comforting' the converts of the American Mission 'concerning their faith,' and urging them 'to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.' On the Lord's day I preached in the chapel to the usual congregation of natives, and on the day following examined the more advanced pupils of the seminary conducted by Mr Abbott. It was matter of regret that neither of us had time to visit the girls' school con

ducted by the ladies of the mission. I was much pleased with their appearance, as well as with that of the boys, as they sat before me, and listened with still and noiseless attention to my discourse, on the Sabbath-day; and, from the little I ascertained by personal examination, I have no doubt they are both well instructed in the highest and best of knowledge.

"*Malegaum, Jan.* 3.—I visited the Ex-Raja of Satara, who had halted here for a day on his route to Benares. He was seated with surrounding attendants very much in his ancient regal state, appeared very cheerful, and conducted himself with his usual complaisance. He recounted the many great friends he had had, both among Residents and Governors. I directed his attention to a better friendship, even that of the almighty, unchanging, and everlasting God. He remarked that means were to be used to secure that friendship. By this he meant that previous service and previous merit were necessary to a participation of the divine favour; and the spirit of his remark was precisely that of the Jewish inquiry, 'What shall we do that we may work the works of God?' I was about to explain and urge the divine reply, 'This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom He hath sent,' and thus to shew that nothing was required of the sinner but to cast himself all unworthy as he is, upon the Saviour, and through him to obtain, at once and for ever, the favour of God: I was about to do this, when His Highness broke off into personal affairs, and insisted on my listening to his history from beginning to end. I found, however, an interval or two to follow out what I had commenced, by stating the doctrine of the Trinity, the atonement by the Son, the necessity of faith in him, and the inseparable connection between faith and the immediate enjoyment of the divine favour and love,

a favour and love to continue not only through the years of time, but the ages of eternity. At the close of our conversation I exhorted the fallen prince to seek another kingdom, one that could not be taken away from him, nor he from it; a kingdom not to be moved, a crown of glory never to fade. I then told him of the reign of Christ at the right hand of the Father, of his invitation to men to unite themselves to his cause, and of his infallible promise to make those who did so sharers with him in his blissful dominion. The Raja listened with respect to what I said; but his mind reverted, with a heavy preponderating weight, to the things of earth and the subjects of time.

"*Nasik*, 10*th and* 11*th Jan.*—I enjoyed the society of my brethren of the 'Church Mission' at this place, and was kindly taken to see the girls' school, the English school for natives, and one of the vernacular boys' schools. The last two I had the pleasure of examining, and occasionally addressing in connection with the examination. I was gratified with their respect and good feeling towards their teachers, and with the degree of intelligence and amount of information which they displayed. The assembly of girls was remarkably pleasing in its appearance; and the manner in which both they, and some of the boys associated with them, sang Marathi hymns, was truly charming. In returning to my quarters in the evening of the 10th, I addressed a company of natives in the city. A considerable part of next day I spent in visiting the temples on the river's bank, and the sacred baths built in its channel. In connection with these visits, I had several opportunities of addressing the natives in greater or smaller numbers; and I must say that I was agreeably surprised to find them listen to me with the patience that they did.

"Nasik is situated on the banks of the elder Gangá, and

is a particularly holy place. Not a cow, I believe, has yet been slain in its precincts; and if the Brahmans are correct in attributing the miseries of a place to the cow-murders that are committed in it, they may reasonably expect to find at Nasik not only a holy, but a happy residence. I have not heard, however, that the Brahmans, and people generally, are less miserable there than they are elsewhere. Alas! the foundation of their misery lies deeper and broader than any act of Government, or any outward practice of their own. It consists in a total apostasy of the heart from the true and living, the just and holy God.

"Our excellent brethren, the appointed messengers of the glad tidings at Nasik, live in a 'city wholly given to idolatry;' and, while their 'spirits are stirred within them,' their hearts, we may presume, often sink within them too. Their situation calls loudly for sympathy and prayer. With the great Apostle's difficulties may they have his wisdom and zeal; and, like their Divine Master, may they not fail, nor be discouraged, till judgment is established among the unjust, and the disobedient wait for Jehovah's law."

In some general reflections which Mr Nesbit subjoins to his Journal, he notes with pleasure the great desire that he found existing almost everywhere for books. He had also traced a considerable increase in the knowledge of Christianity among the Maratha people. He then proceeds:—

"Those who have read the preceding journal with any degree of attention, cannot fail to have observed the disclosure which it makes of the *enmity of the people towards the English Government.* To it they ascribe all their sins, and consequently all their miseries. They have no idea of the possibility of religion and morality subsisting without the authoritative injunction, and sanction, and support of Government. The withdrawment or denial of the latter they con-

ceive to be the destruction of the former; and, in as far as the English Government is chargeable with the one, they believe it to be guilty of the other. Its non-enforcement of almsgiving is the destruction of charity; its neglect of cows and Brahmans is the destruction of religion; its indifference to caste is the destruction of all order and propriety, of all peace and comfort, and the introduction of the worst stage of the world in which it awaits the last and fatal inflictions of the destroyer. 'As is the king, so is the people,' is a law of the political world which they believe to be incapable either of change or mitigation, which it would be unscriptural, presumptuous, and blasphemous for them to endeavour to escape, and which, in the case of one whom they consider to be an evil king, they look upon with sullen and fixed despair. And to give a Government the aspect of evil, a mere negation of qualities and acts is quite enough. What must, then, be their view of the evil of the English Government, when it not only does not keep low caste men at a proper distance, but invites them to the presence of its dignity, and employs them in offices of trust and of honour; when it not only does not worship Brahmans, but hangs them; when it not only does not protect cows, but gives them up to be murdered and eaten; when it not only does not guard and hallow the most holy places, but desecrates them by the sanctioned residence and occupation of butchers and blasphemers! The single crime of cow-murder is enough to render the Government hateful in the regards of all genuine Hindus. That crime not only makes it sinful, but, how much soever they may disapprove or remonstrate, it makes them sinful too. It stamps them as guilty, and renders them depraved. It pervades the whole land with evil, and fills it with misery. By this one act the Government insults their fondest and strongest

feelings, and wounds their prejudices, more than by all its other acts put together.

"Will, then, the Government abandon these its obnoxious practices? It will not; and what enlightened man would say it should? But it will communicate that secular knowledge through which the natives may rise superior to their prejudices, and to all the unhappy feelings to which those prejudices give birth. And will they then become good and loving subjects? There are (the preceding pages witness but too distinctly that there are) other causes of dislike of Government, and discontent under it, than those which arise from superstition. There are selfishness, and impatience of restraint and control; there are pride and ambition; there are sloth and covetousness, and envy; there are these evil passions and principles and habits, which form a fruitful and never-failing source of disaffection and rebellion. Till these are done away, the evil is only modified, not removed; a furious rabble of religionists is changed, but it is only into a malignant combination of chartists. Let us strike at the root of the evil, the selfishness of man. Let us meet this selfishness by love, and then all is accomplished; for 'the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' And let us diffuse this love by the manifestation to the understanding and the heart of the only love that can create and maintain it,—the love of God in Christ. Other exhibitions of God may enlighten and convince, and alarm; but they must necessarily leave the fallen heart of man in its native alienation from God, and from His law. Even should they be exhibitions of love, they must do this; for they only rebuke the heart for its frequent forgetfulness of God, and its great ingratitude towards Him, and its ever-recurring opposition to His will, and thus shew it its sinful-

ness, confirm its fears and suspicions, and harden its enmity. But the love of God in Christ brings a holy and infinitely precious pardon with it, reconciles the heart to God, melts it into love, and moulds it into obedience. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.'"

He writes to Mr M. Mitchell :—

"*Chandore, Jan.* 7.—MY DEAR MR MITCHELL,—We are following the shortest main-road to the Presidency, and hope to reach it before Sabbath, the 19th. We feel our long absence too much not to desire as speedy a return as possible. I fear that both Dr Wilson and yourself have had too great a burden pressing upon you, in the form both of vernacular and English services; and I wish I were present in Bombay to bear the burden with you, and, if possible, to lighten it to you. . . . .

. . . . I find a very great difference everywhere as to the bare knowledge of the gospel; and a little difference as to the feeling borne towards it, which appears to me one not for the better, but for the worse. In places where the truth has been frequently made known, the opposition is tremendous. Mrs Nesbit has often said since we left Bombay, 'I feel more than ever the necessity of a Divine and Almighty operation in the hearts of men.' That, my dear brother, is to be got by prayer; and it is the only thing that can render all our other gettings of any avail. . . . . We trust that Hormazdji and Dhanji are in every sense doing well. Remember us affectionately to them, and tell them that we expect soon to have the pleasure of seeing them again. Let them cleave unto the Lord with a perfect heart and serve Him with a willing mind. Let them become 'rich in faith,' and then they will know that though 'poor'

among men, they are 'heirs of that kingdom which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'"

In the month of February the missionaries at Bombay had the great happiness of receiving Dr Duff, on his way to Calcutta, after his first visit to Europe. He presided at the annual examination of the Institution, delivering at the close an admirable address; preached in the Scotch church; and had just commenced a series of public lectures on India when he was compelled to hurry his departure by the vessel sailing sooner than he had anticipated. In the mean time he had visited Poona, in company with Mr Nesbit. Dr Wilson and Mr Murray Mitchell were just setting off on a missionary tour through Gujarat, as far as the southern part of Rajputana; they parted with Dr Duff and Mr Nesbit at Tanna, after a day spent in the exploration of those remarkable monuments of superstition, the Buddhist cave-temples which exist in the neighbourhood.

The following are a few extracts from notes written by Mr Nesbit to his wife on his hurried journey, and visit, to Poona:—

"I have had much pleasant conversation with Dr Duff already, and expect to have much more, which I will retail to my beloved. Mean time you must not be weary. You must comfort yourself with the knowledge of my love, and with the still greater love which brought us together."

"*Carlee, Feb.* 1840.—Here we are, after nearly a solid night's marching. . . . .

"I have just come from the adjoining room of the bungalow, where I have been reading and praying with and exhorting ——'s sister. She is much distressed by her great bereavement. I feel these bereavements far more than I used to feel them. . . . I had an opportunity of speaking to the natives at Panwel yesterday; and I hope to be

able to give them a few words before we start. It is a great comfort to be a witness for God wherever we go. That says to my dearest, *Tú Maráthí bháshá shikat zá áni bolat hi zá.** [Do thou go on learning and speaking the Marathi tongue.]

"*Poona, 2d March.*—In the evening I was obliged to take all the preparatory exercises; but Dr Duff was able to give us an extemporaneous effusion on 'We are ambassadors for Christ.' —— said, 'What a stream of poetry!' Mrs ——, 'That is a sermon of sermons.'"

He writes, after his return, to Mr M. Mitchell:—

"My Dear Mr Mitchell,—Your letter from Surat was most grateful, both to myself and to the two ladies whose thoughts so much and so vividly awaken yours. . . . .

"I sympathise with you deeply in your feelings respecting India's state and prospects. Darkness covers her, and gross darkness her nations; and but for that sure word of prophecy, into which we are privileged to 'take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,' we should ourselves be enveloped in the gloom, and but for the promise that 'the day *shall* dawn, and the day star *shall* arise, we could anticipate nothing cheering for the future. We have just been reading Taylor's 'Ancient Christianity,' and see more vividly than ever the fewness and smallness of Christianity's triumphs throughout the whole length of her bygone history. Is it not an unspeakable comfort to see the notices of this state of things which are scattered abroad in the gospels and epistles? 'The mystery of iniquity doth already work.' 'Even now are there many Antichrists.' 'After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.' 'The love of many shall wax cold.' 'Thou hast left thy first love; remember, and re-

* Mr Nesbit uses the Marathi character, which we have *Romanized*.

pent, or else I will come and remove thy lamp.' Have these sad sketches been filled up? Then will also the glowing pictures of the abundance of truth, and righteousness, and peace, and love, be fully realised. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' If these works have been rampant for eighteen hundred years, and are rampant still, think with what a full destruction the Divine destroyer must yet overtake them! Yes; it was sad, my brother, that the Governor and great men who sway the political destinies of India should dance and revel over their triumphs. Dear Alexander Duff alluded to it in a most affecting manner at the end of his first and last lecture. He was connecting India with Europe, and both with Heaven. They were associating all with the pride of aggrandizement and the pleasures of luxury. It was when he was speaking of the responsibilities which the possession of power in India implied and imposed, that he burst out into the indignant inquiry, whether the revellers of the evening were either feeling or fulfilling them. . . . .

"The Institution is now recovering its strength. A Parsi lad had his name enrolled the other day. Now, don't build upon this, but quietly wait till I see and tell you the issue. . . . The young Parsi *alumni* have gone out to Bandora, to stay there a while with Miss Anna Bayne. I have given them a subject to write on, which touches on all the foundations of morals and jurisprudence, 'The Evil of Sin.'

"Right glad are we to hear that you are so well in the midst of the burning heat and fatiguing toil of your marches, and of your ministerial calling. May grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you both, as receivers of the truth and communicators of the same; as subjects, and as stewards of the manifold grace of God. Remember

most affectionately, to our brother John, dearest Hây and myself. We rejoice that he has recovered all his former self. I commenced a fortnightly Tuesday lecture on the 24th, which was tolerably attended.—Yours, in Christian love."

We again pass over a few months as occupied in the usual mode. The only thing that claims special remark is the "fortnightly lecture," referred to in the above letter. It was largely attended by young natives; and a good many Europeans were usually present. It was as much a conversation as a lecture. Pointed questions stimulated all minds. Mr Nesbit spoke from brief notes, and often powerfully,—first flinging out a great thought broad and undefined, often somewhat to the astonishment of his audience,—then proceeding to explain, and qualify, and apply it. These lectures or addresses did not convey much new information; but as a discipline both of the intellectual and moral powers, they were invaluable to the youth of Bombay. He lectured on the attributes of God; but, in fact, he found "sermons in stones," and might have discoursed on anything with profit to his hearers.

He proceeded on a missionary tour in the end of October, accompanied by Mrs Nesbit.

To Mr M. Mitchell.

"*Hurnee, 3d Nov.* 1840.—We arrived here seven days after first embarking at Bombay. On Saturday and Sabbath we spent our time at Alibag in speaking of Messiah to the Jews, and of Jesus the Son of God to the Gentiles. On Monday we commenced our work at Rewadunda, and continued it both there and at Ambegaum till Tuesday evening, the same classes as before occupying our attention, and calling forth somewhat of our energies and prayers. The Jewish head-teacher was active and obliging, and did not appear to

be playing a part, as Hindu employés almost always do. I had thus a good deal of satisfaction in the examination of the schools, as well as a painful pleasure in contending for, and setting forth the truth among promiscuous assemblies which generally opposed its dictates and resisted its claims. At Bankote I met with no opposition; and the applicants for books, especially for Hindustani ones, were very numerous. You will feel much interest in the spread of the English language, at least of the desire and the effort to acquire it, which manifests itself in all the principal places. Bankote has no fewer than two English schools at present. Dapoolie has got an excellent English school under the care of a pious man. 'Sir, I want book,' meets your ear in many little assemblies of natives in the streets. At Dapoolie I had an excellent audience yesterday in the bazaar, and distributed as many books as I could part with. On the Sabbath, *inter alia*, I occupied the English chaplain's place in the church. . . . Here the people seem very indifferent and light-hearted when addressed on the serious matters of their souls' salvation. Cooper, Stevenson, myself, Mitchell, Drake, and others, who have statedly laboured here, have all apparently 'laboured in vain and spent our strength for nought.' O that the Spirit were poured out from on high, that the wilderness might become a fruitful field!"

To Miss Bayne.

"*Goa, 17th Nov.* 1840.—My Dearest Anna,—Here we are at last. Twenty-six days have passed over us since we left Bombay. . . . . We had a peep up the river this morning, which shewed water, and hill, and shady valley, and the lofty blue mountain behind them all, in such richness and variety as to oppress the soul with their grandeurs and delights. We anticipate much from the view of these works divine, as we move up the river, and still more as we

approach the ghauts. Hay has been much depressed at the spiritual desolation of the European stations, and her heart has sunk to utter fainting under the impression of the power of Satan over the minds of the heathen. At Vingorla there were eight Europeans resident to whom an invitation to attend public worship was sent, but no more than three attended—a captain, a lieutenant, and a sergeant.

"I had good audiences, as far as numbers and attention are concerned, among the natives. The Brahmans, both at Malwan and Vingorla, are much less lofty than they are further north, and hence things go on much better. All our Portuguese tracts and books passed the ordeal of the custom-house without remark."

On this journey Mrs Nesbit was seized with an alarming illness, and for a time recovery seemed hopeless. From many touching letters written at this solemn period, we can afford to quote only the following:—

To Miss Bayne.

"*Belgaum*, 13*th Dec.* 1840.—My beloved patient appears much better to-day. We both hope, as we earnestly pray, that the Lord, who has already done wonders on our behalf, may renèw them for our comfort and his glory, on this occasion. We strive to lay hold of the blessed angel, and weep for a blessing from his lips, for He has but to 'speak the word, and it shall be done.' The centurion, the nobleman of Capernaum, the ruler of the synagogue, the widow of Nain, and many others, all invite and encourage us to ask. They tell us that He is full of pity, so that He often gives without entreaty, and full of faithfulness and love, so that He heareth and answereth prayer. I was to have preached to-day, Marathi in the morning and English in the evening; but the Lord has appointed the day's duties and exercises differently. He means to give me more of a tender and

bruised heart, that I may feel His gospel more and tell it better. And oh! what excellent and lovely graces are drawn forth in your beloved sister's experience. She has been brought closer than ever to God, and is drawing and drinking more than ever from the eternal fountains. She begs of her beloved Anna, that she will not allow her spirit to be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow, for the Lord doeth all things well."

To THE SAME.

"Magnify the Lord with us; and let us exalt his name together. We sought the Lord and he heard us, and delivered us from all our fears. We were brought low, and he helped us. We will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. We will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. We will pay our vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people.

"You may conceive of my joy when Dr ——, who had entertained such an unfavourable view of her case, gave hope of restoration to health. We did not, I trust, look to the physician, but to the Lord, and the Lord has been better to us than the physician dared to encourage us to hope. May our joy abound with that rare but precious ingredient, gratitude; and may our gratitude, like the tenth leper's, be identified with 'giving glory to God,' all our life long. Your beloved sister unites with me in tenderest love, and prays God that the impress of his holiness may be more visibly than ever enstamped upon each of us. . . . . We feel assured that yourself and our dear brother, and all our beloved brethren and sisters in Bombay, will not cease to pray earnestly in our behalf; and we know that the prayer of the children, the gracious Father will never disregard. . . .

"Our dear brother's [Dr Wilson's] deep sympathies with us, and ardent prayers for us, find a reflective and corres-

ponding response in our bosoms. He knows our trial, not as a brother only. I thank our dear friend Mr Mitchell for the consolations he has administered to you; and tell him how much we value his affectionate regard to us, and his supplications on our behalf. We are surrounded with comforts; and we often admire the kind providence that brought us to Captain R——'s large, and well-sheltered, and most quiet house, and to his liberal and easy hospitality."

He writes to the Parsi converts :—

"*Belgaum, Dec.* 26. 1840.—MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS.— . . . . Reading and speaking of Elam last night, we again read your interesting communication. We rejoiced that while Jehovah has 'set up his throne in Elam' to 'destroy from thence the king and the princes,' he has also 'set up his throne' in you to enrich and honour you with the blessings of his reign; nay, has made you 'kings and priests' to himself, that you may 'reign for ever and ever.' Jehovah has 'brought back your captivity;' and he will bring back that of all your race. If he give you not the soil of Elam to inherit, he will grant you a better inheritance. He will now regale you with the fruits of the 'better country;' and he will at last bestow upon you the full possession of the country itself. Nay, he will give you that in which the riches and glories of all lands are centred, and from which they are all derived,—the inheritance of himself. O that your benighted countrymen could see these things, and seek them! Now, alas, they see only the objects of sense. All that they ask is, 'What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?' But let us not despair; for such were you, and God opened your eyes, and touched your hearts; and the same wonder of grace he can do again. Only be urgent in prayer, and give 'the Hearer of prayer' no rest, until he arise and verify

his blessed word, and magnify his glorious grace. It would seem to tend little towards the conversion of the Pársís,—towards the restoration of Elam's captivity,—that two 'boys' should 'enter a closet, and shut the door,' and offer up a prayer, and offer it up again, and find no peace but in again and again presenting it. But this, if realised, may be the very thing on which that conversion and restoration may ultimately hinge. For 'if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my 'Father which is in heaven.'"

To His Sister.

"*Bombay, Jan.* 28. 1841.— . . . . We have just returned from a protracted tour in the districts. . . . . Our tour, little more than half finished, we came from Belgaum direct to Bombay, and my beloved H. arrived at home considerably better than she left it. This calm after the storm was the most delightful season I have ever enjoyed. In sailing towards Bombay we put ashore, or anchored, on the Sabbath days. These days were given almost entirely to thanksgiving, and blessing, and praise; and I almost despair of ever having so much enjoyment again. Dear —— [a relative who had lost his wife] will say that my joy was easy; and it is indeed difficult to tell how much of it was natural, and how much spiritual. But it is from the same love that his trial and my deliverance spring; and, if so, he is called to rejoice as well as we; and, if he realise that joy, it will be a purer and more elevated one than mine. It will come up to the apostolic precept and experience so remarkable, and, to the men of the world, so incomprehensible. 'In everything give thanks;' 'I glory and take pleasure in infirmities, in necessities, in distresses.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL WORK—DEATH OF MISS A. BAYNE—VISIT TO CEYLON—RESCUE OF PARSI CHILD—DISRUPTION OF CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THE engagements of Mr Nesbit continued, in the year 1841, much the same as they had previously been.

He rejoiced in an important accession to the evangelistic agencies in Western India. The Irish Presbyterian Church commenced a Mission in the province of Katiawar. The missionaries, Messrs Glasgow and Kerr, arrived in the month of February. The large country of Gujarat had now two missions, but both feeble in numbers.

The following is an outline, written by himself, in a brief retrospect of the work of the year.

"1. I may commence with preparation of books for the natives. Although I have not been able to effect anything original in this department, I have had the satisfaction of revising sentence by sentence, and often word by word, the whole of a Marathi translation of the first and best part of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and I have revised, in the same manner, Gallaudet's work, entitled, 'Youth's Book of Natural Theology.' This is a publication well calculated to divert the mind from the metaphysical nonsense of Brahminical theology, and to direct attention, and intelligent wonder, to the manifestations of the divine wisdom, power,

and goodness displayed in man himself, and in the world in which he dwells.

"2. But the revision of translations of the Scriptures, has, as it is still more important, occupied still more of my time. I should suppose that fully two days of the week have been exhausted in this laborious work.

"3. Under the head of teaching, my work in the Institution holds the first and most prominent place. The books read are strictly text-books. The lessons they furnish become each the subject of a lecture; and, although little is read, much I trust is learned. Every subject is exhibited in its relation to God, to his all perfect nature and character, and the eternal principles of his government, and thus tends to unveil truth, and discover the vast importance of that word which is light to them that sit in darkness, and life to the dead. On Tuesday evening I have a lecture at my own house. It is given in a catechetical form, and is designed especially for native youth who have some acquaintance with English. During the last year we were occupied chiefly with the divine attributes. The constitution of the Godhead, as consisting of three persons, and the eternal decrees of God, were also considered. Every Wednesday and Saturday morning I have a class open for English reading with natives of the same description as those already referred to. The books read are various, the 'Paradise Lost,' the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'M'Culloch's Course of Reading,' and a volume of sermons. What may be more strictly called religious teaching is conducted in the Marathi language. It is my habit to give instruction out of the Scriptures to my servants every morning, and to this service, somewhat prolonged on the Lord's day, the servants of my neighbours are invited. I have thus frequently a considerable number to

catechise and address; and the simple, yet great and solemn truths which they have in this manner been taught, will not, I trust, be altogether lost.

"4. Under the head of preaching, our stated services are the same as in former years on the Lord's day. At Ambrolie and the Poor's Asylum I have taken my part with my brethren in the Marathi services. I never feel more the necessity for 'God to work,' than when addressing these congregations. There is an unimpressible callousness to the truth, as such, which, spread over the whole heart and conscience, seems to defy all instruction and exhortation, every alarming threat, and inviting promise. Mr Murray Mitchell and myself have set apart three evenings of the week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday being otherwise occupied) for preaching to the natives wherever they can be most efficiently and numerously addressed. May 'the God of all grace' give us at once the time, and the will, and the strength, to do much more than we have yet attempted."

A very heavy affliction, deeply felt, not only by relatives, but by every one connected with the mission, occurred towards the end of this year. We refer to the death of Miss Anna Bayne. The following extract from a letter of Mr Nesbit's, to a friend, gives a just delineation of her character, and shews how keenly he felt the stroke, while he "sorrowed not as those who have no hope:"—

"*Bombay, Nov.* 1841.—Her noble tender spirit, her self-forgetting generous disposition, her ardent affection, her elevated aspirations, you knew and prized. She was truly one of the fairest of the daughters of men. We in vain look around for another Anna. This we have felt a withering thought; and even at this distance of time, it often spreads desolation over our spirits. You will not wonder

that this bereavement has brought my beloved Hay very low. Had she not found a comforter 'meet for her,' her trial would, to all human appearance, have been greater than she could have borne; and nothing could exceed the gratitude with which her guardian sister contemplated this manifestation of grace on her deathbed. The sisters used sometimes to question themselves how they could bear a separation, especially in India, and the thought was one of relief and comfort that they might possibly die together. But God was better than their thoughts, and the separation, on the one side at least, was one of perfect peace and satisfaction. 'Hay, I have loved you to agony, but I leave you without a pang.' And then she would refer to that better country, where all can look upon the objects of their love without fear or sorrow, where they can satisfy themselves with the intensest love, and know it to be all holy and harmless, undefiled, and unfading. 'Her's is a mind' her sister often says, 'to enjoy heaven.' A flower filled her with delight; the calmly beaming planets overpowered her; and the lofty mountains, overhung with fleecy clouds, made her weep profusely. And all this because she saw in them the loveliness and excellence of Him that made them, and the loveliness and excellence of those whom He has created anew. What, then, will be her delight and joy, as she walks in white in the paradise above, gazes upon the bright and Morning Star of the upper sphere, set round with all the sanctities of heaven, 'thick' as the gems of night, and turns her eyes to the full display of that 'mercy which is in the heavens, and that faithfulness which reacheth unto the clouds, that righteousness which is as the great mountains, and those judgments which are a vast deep?' For four or five months before her translation, she was evidently re-

ceiving a special preparation for those high and holy enjoyments. . . . .

"Our dear brother, Dr Wilson, is now just recovering his strength. He has lost much in the removal of one whose presence was the grand ornament and comfort of his house. May he find the deficiency made up in the infinite God."

Anna Bayne was long and deeply mourned by every member of the mission circle, in which we include the Parsi brethren, Hormazdji and Dhanjibhai, over whose spiritual progress, since their baptism in May 1839, she had watched with a mother's tenderest affection. Nor only by the mission circle; for none, on whom the mild radiance of her presence ever shone, can possibly forget her—"Anna the true," as we used to call her, adverting to the exquisite guilelessness of her nature—"the self-sacrificing Anna," as her fervent sister was wont to ejaculate—Anna who, like Mary, so often sat at the feet of Christ, learning of Him the meek and lowly heart, and by a most winning example, teaching others to do the same—

> "Oh blest are they who live and die like her,
> Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned!"

Mrs Nesbit's health had completely given way under the effects of the fatigue, anxiety, and sorrow, that had come upon her in connection with her sister's illness and death. A sea voyage was deemed necessary; and early in 1842 Mr Nesbit and she sailed from Bombay to Ceylon.

He found in Ceylon, he tells us, "much interesting work, especially in connection with the many Scottish settlers scattered over its rich and salubrious hills."

To Mr Murray Mitchell.

"*Kandy, Feb.* 1842.—I could not but visit the interior, teeming, as it now does, with new and momentous interest.

The whole of the hilly districts seem destined to be possessed by English and Scotch landlords, served by hundreds of Europeans, and tens of thousands of natives. Kandy has shot up into a considerable town in the course of five years; and crowded contiguous estates will soon form other towns and villages. No means are used to leaven the little mass that must eventually give its own character to half the population of the island. The Government ought decidedly to grant a Scotch chaplain for the numerous Scotchmen on the estates,—one who might preach at the most suitable places, and visit every place. Again, it would be most desirable to have a missionary appointed, whom the planters from previous knowledge, or prejudice if you will, will be most inclined to favour and to aid in the instruction of the natives. I have been making all inquiries, and revolving such thoughts as my uninventive mind can call up, with a view to the arrangement of some feasible plan to effect these objects, and to-morrow I shall visit one or two estates on my way to Nuwera Ellia.

"The number of converts under the operations of missionaries, is considerably greater here than in upper India. In Ceylon, the Christian is the man of highest caste; and this feeling removes a great barrier to the hearing of the word. The converts, however, are, like our own from among the Hindus, weak as water. The best, who are appointed as catechists, generally entail disappointment on their employers. What is this sore evil? Dr Duff says he understands it. It arises from a deficient education and training, which can only be given through the medium of English, and by English lessons, and English books, and English society. I wish I could see my way as clear before me as that prince of teachers does. All missions, in the mean time, are giving a place more or less prominent to educa-

tion, through the medium of English. The Americans, the English Baptists, Wesleyans, Episcopalians, in this island, all have recourse to it; and the Americans at Jaffna, you know, make it their main engine. But what is to become of the mass of the people? Will the superior teaching in the native tongues of our well-instructed and well-trained native ministers, be so far superior to our own as to form genuine and steady converts, in hundreds and in thousands? Yes, if the Spirit accompanies it. And what if the Spirit accompanied our ministrations among them? We must speak more on this subject when we meet. It is one which, rightly or wrongly understood, must vastly promote or retard our labours.

"Yesterday morning I visited a Buddhist college and monastery. We took a Church of England catechist with us, and held an hour and a half's conference with the monks. The high priest for the year (for he is chosen annually) was present. The old man left us two or three times in anger, and retired to his cell; but the younger brethren kept up the discussion during his periods of absence. They displayed no wish to compare different systems, or to discover the truth. They avowed their leading doctrine,—no Creator, no Preserver, no Governor; all events take place from the influence of merit and demerit. The mind that can swallow such an absurdity is fit to receive and digest anything. There is no system, however, which a common English education would sooner destroy. It labours under the happy disadvantage, too, of having scarcely any popular attractions; and even now, its adherents care less and less about its temples and ceremonies. I have just returned from visiting the shrine of the famous tooth, the palladium of empire to whomsoever it may belong. The priests admitted us into the "sanctum sanctorum,"

and let us handle the vessels of the very slab on which the golden case containing the relic stands. The worshippers were very few compared with those of former times, and almost nothing compared with the crowd at a Hindu place of similar sanctity."

We subjoin a few extracts from letters written from the interior of the island to Mrs Nesbit, who remained at Colombo :—

"Kandy is more crowded with buyers and sellers on Sabbath than on any other day. On Sunday morning the labourers come in from the neighbouring estates, transact all the week's business, and return home in the evening. Many estates, however, are so far removed from any town, that they must stay at home on the Lord's day; and there I should expect an opening and success among them. It is well that the West Indies cannot be transferred hither. Some attempted to do so, but the labourers ran away and left them; and it is only by just and kind treatment that the planters can accomplish their own objects. Thus they learn mildness by force, and are kind from very selfishness.

"How are we to reach and pervade these rising estates, with the towns which they will in all probability create? Now is the time. Let the leaven be put in now, and it will, through the Divine blessing, diffuse its virtue with and throughout the increasing mass. But what a prospect to have the heathen rendered more intensely heathenish, and the 'Christians' lose even the outward decencies of their profession! And yet this will be the case if the means of grace are not supplied.

"—— kindly accompanied me from Nilamba to Pusilawa, and introduced me to two planters residing there, with whom we had tea, and where I had the pleasure of conducting family worship. My ministrations have invariably been

offered both morning and evening, wherever I have gone, and have always been well received. —— is very desirous to persuade me to come and reside with his brother planters and himself, and give my services to them and their native labourers.

"The scenery here (Nuwera Ellia), as far as I have seen it, is better than that of the Nielgherries, but still inferior to that of Mahabuleshwar. The ascent is so sloping and gradual that you never look back or forward to anything precipitous, or apparently grand and sublime; and very seldom does the ascent admit of your seeing the lower part of the country at all. After reaching the top you descend into the plain called, in the native tongue, Ellia. But the ancient *Nuwera*, or city, no where presents itself to view. God has made all of it, except its name and a few ruins, to perish 'for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein.' And now another race is on probation, and building houses, and planting gardens, which will again disappear, unless dedicated and surrendered to Him who 'gives power to get wealth,' and whose 'blessing alone maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.'

The climate is colder than that of Mahabuleshwar; and I do not think the east wind is so injurious, being tempered a good deal by the mists of the mountains. . . . .

"It is indeed a mercy that I did not receive the account of your illness till it came coupled with that of your recovery. I had thus both the warning of my dependence upon God, and the call to gratitude and praise, at one and the same time. I would praise the Lord and extol Him more and more. Again and again I commend you, my love, to the mercy and grace of our heavenly Father. May He spare you, and in sparing you, bless me! . . .

"Yesterday and this morning I have been drawing up the chaplaincy petition; for I see my way most clearly in

that direction. Probably the breaking up of the one path will lay open the other also.

"We were dreadfully shocked, and much grieved and humbled, by the account of the Cabool force. I read Psalms 121, 125, 126 in the evening, and lifted up the voice of supplication and of confidential praise accordingly. The awful heart-rending scene kept me awake from half past two till the time I arose to make ready for my journey. I will not particularise or dwell upon it, as it has, I dare say, already too deeply affected you. What sufferings we are spared! What mercies we enjoy!"

Mrs Nesbit's health was greatly restored by the voyage to and from Ceylon. Returning to Bombay Mr Nesbit resumed his work with a glad and grateful heart. From his statement of engagements drawn up towards the end of the year, we quote the following:—

"My text-books in instructing the young men of the higher division of the Institution are the Bible, Milton's Paradise Lost, Abercrombie on the Moral Feelings, and M'Culloch's Course of Reading. All the lessons become the ground-work of extended exposition, illustration, and discussion. The scholars are largely catechised; and they are encouraged to put questions in return. They freely state objections, and express doubts, and generally receive suitable replies from one or two of their own number. It is extremely interesting to see the interchange of thought between them, especially when the Hindu, the Mohammadan, the Israelite, and professing Christian, correct each other in their respective errors, and truth rises calmly above them all, and, by her majesty and beauty, invites universal admiration and acceptance. While the Bible formally occupies the place of one of a series of text-books, it may be said to pervade the whole; everything that occurs is considered in reference to

its statements, and promises, and precepts; and the constant endeavour is to bring its light to bear on the whole region of truth, so that the beauty and brightness of the scene may not only delight the eye, but tell of the heavenly origin of that which so discovers it to view.

"Some of the young men belonging to this class possess a fearful measure of light and conviction. The present seems to be the crisis of their moral history. Impressions now obliterated will probably never be renewed. In these circumstances they call loudly for our prayers on their behalf, that 'the entrance of the Divine word' may not only 'give light,' but impart strength, and decide the soul for ever in its choice of God as its sure and satisfying portion.

"On two evenings of the week Mr Murray Mitchell and I have gone out to address the natives with considerable regularity. We are generally listened to with interest; and may console ourselves with the reflection, that we have acted the part of witnesses for God, and that our testimony has been in some measure understood. But in these, as well as in our more stated exercises, we have still to complain, 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of Jehovah revealed'? May the complaint call forth from our hearts the agonising prayer of the prophet, 'Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, to make Thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence!' 'Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.'"

The heavy sorrows through which Mr Nesbit had passed in the death of his beloved sister, and the feeble health of his wife, had led him to anchor his soul more fully than ever on the Rock of Ages. There is more than ever manifest,

a clinging trustfulness—a melting sense of the Redeemer's infinite compassion—a seeing deeper into the fathomless depths of His tenderly loving heart. And well is he 'able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he himself is comforted of God.' He writes to an afflicted relative :—

"*Bombay, Dec.* 1. 1842.—We have most inadequate ideas of all the Divine perfections; but perhaps of none of them are they so inadequate as of the Divine compassion. There is great and tender pity among men. Whence does it all flow? All the rivers of human sympathy and affection are but drops from the exhaustless fountain of the divine loving-kindness and tender mercy. The bare manifestation of these feelings, taken in connection with the infinite nature of Him who manifests them, might lead us to the conclusion that they dwell in Him unbounded and unending. This of itself might rebuke our mean and narrow imaginations of the pity of Jehovah. But with a proof before our eyes of the infinitude of that pity in an infinite sacrifice and infinite gift, these imaginations are put to utter shame, and, we might suppose, would also be for ever put to flight.

"In addition to this overwhelming proof that 'the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy,' we have verbal assurances the most intensely convincing, and the most touchingly pathetic. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.' 'Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget thee.' 'Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels *are troubled for him.* I will surely have mercy upon him.' Here is the highest refinement, and most elevated height, of compassion. It is so, in a measure, with ourselves. To 'speak against'

those we love gives us far more pain than it can give them. But it is so superlatively with 'the Father of our spirits.' His words of rebuke return upon Himself with far greater violence than they fall upon those whom he rebukes. 'In all their affliction He is afflicted,' and, we may add, afflicted infinitely more. He is so because he has an infinite view of their infinite cause, which we have not. See the embodiment of all this in 'God manifested in the flesh.' Is His a little sorrow? a little sympathy? a little love? Do His feelings only come up to ours? Does His sorrow merely balance our grief? Do His sympathy and love merely meet our feeling of misery, and our desire of affection? They go immeasurably beyond them all. They teach us to multiply our sorrow for sin a thousand-fold, and to long for love with an ardour which we have never yet known, and never on earth shall know. 'His visage was marred more than any man; and his form more than the sons of men.' 'He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' 'His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' 'He loved us, and *gave himself* for us.

"We have been much struck with the tenderness of God in His late dealings with ourselves. Often has He 'delivered our eyes from tears, our feet from falling, and our souls from death.' My darling Hay has been frequently at the very gates of the grave. But in His love and pity He has heard our prayers, and has spared us a trial which I fear I could not sustain. May these His tender mercies, no less than His severe inflictions, bind us more than ever to Himself, by revealing him to us as our first and last friend, and our soul's best and only portion. And may your sore afflictions, though enclosing you as a net, and admitting of no escape (Psa. lxvi. 11), have the same blessed effect. He is only 'proving you, and trying you as silver is tried.' He is

'bringing you through fire and through water;' but it is with the design of landing you in 'a wealthy place.' And, in the mean time, 'when thou passest through the waters, they shall not overflow thee; and while thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' At every new trial, or aggravation of an old one, which is perhaps still harder to bear, hear Christ saying to you, Can you trust me now? Can you trust me in this also? And do reply, 'Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee.' Our united most affectionate regards to the beloved ones at Berwick."

On the 2d January of the year 1843, Dr Wilson left India to recruit his health in Europe. Connected with the Free Church Mission in Bombay, there remained Mr Nesbit and Mr Murray Mitchell. It had long been felt that the ordained European missionaries labouring in Bombay ought at least to be three—that is, three actually on the spot; which implied that four must be attached to the station. The sad deficiency of agents was impressively shewn a week or two afterwards, when Mr Nesbit was seized with illness. On his recovery, he wrote to the Rev. Dr Brunton, Convener of the Committee on Foreign Missions:—

"*Feb.* 1843.—I should have written you last month, but was laid up with fever at the time. In the absence of Dr Wilson, and with an accumulation of duty devolving on Mr M. Mitchell, I was perhaps tempted to resume my labours too soon after my recovery. The result at all events was a relapse from which I suffered much more than from the first attack, and my colleague was again left to labour alone for a fortnight. A simple incident of this kind will illustrate and confirm all that Mr Mitchell said last month on the subject of an additional labourer for Bombay. On my sick-

bed, I urged him to press the matter strongly, in his communication to the Committee, and I would now personally add to the pressure of the application. The Church of Scotland would do well to us, and well for herself, did she grant us help with a hearty good will. The Lord will not forget the 'work of faith and labour of love.' 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor,' &c. Cometh this blessedness only upon him who considereth those who are destitute of this world's goods? Much more surely upon them who consider those who are afflicted with a deeper poverty, and whose necessities demand a better treasure than this world can furnish."

The Church at that time complacently spoke of her "stations" in Western India, and flattered herself that she had "occupied" the great cities of Bombay and Poona. No delusion could be more complete; but that delusion the missionaries strove in vain to dispel. When will the churches learn that a multiplication of weak mission posts is a mockery and a snare?

His illness compelled Mr Nesbit to take a voyage along the coast. He passed many familiar places; and the sight as usual awoke solemn feelings. He writes to his wife :—

"*Jayagad*, 2*d March* 1843.—The little boat excelled at least in one thing, that is sailing. We anchored below the fort at midnight, thus making the passage in twenty-three hours. . . . . I leant over my cabin window and looked at most of the villages, where we had so often taught and preached the gospel. My soul was touched with a painful melancholy forming itself into a complaint, not against God but to God. When wilt Thou arise and have pity on Thy name, and have mercy on Thy servants? When wilt Thou shew the heathen Thy power and glory, and give them Thy grace? When will all the glorious things spoken of Thy

word, and Thy kingdom, be accomplished? We see no sign. All is darkness; and, did we not hope against hope, all would be despair. O Lord, give us a token for good, that Thine enemies may see it and be ashamed; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt, with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. O Lord, pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplications! So shall we wait upon Thee, so shall we refrain from silence, and give Thee no rest until Thou arise and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Unite with me as you have ever done, and unite more fervently than you have ever done, in seeking so as to get a blessing from on high. Your physical strength admits of but little exertion, and you cannot possibly do much that requires it. But your spirit is strong, your desires are intense, your love is ardent; and these are the elements of prevailing prayer. We cannot join in supplication; but let us do so apart, till our heavenly Father, great in mercy and tenderness as in power and might, bring us together again.

"*3d March.*—I trust you 'possess your soul in patience,' and draw peace, and quiet, and comfort from that throne, high and lifted up above the agitations of the world and of humanity, to which you daily, and hourly, and every moment repair. Let our conversation be only more in heaven, and we shall live far happier, and to much better purpose on the earth.

"This morning I visited almost all the houses within the outer fort, which are far more numerous than I had imagined. I found several readers; and to most of the families I gave a short statement of the love of God, and urged them to accept of its blessed communications.

"I have just returned from the village with which your associations are so painful. Had you been with me to-night,

they would have been much modified. I sat within the same enclosure as before, and addressed the same class of people. But my audience was as quiet as it was formerly noisy, and outwardly as pleasing and hopeful as it was painful and discouraging before. It is thus we meet with a smoother and rougher path, and lights and shadows cast upon our way. And it is thus also we must pass calmly through good report and bad report, and be content to be worshipped as gods one day, and cursed and abhorred as devils the next.

"*Chiploon*, 10*th March* 1843.— . . . . I am well, freed I think from all disposition to fever; but my throat and ear are still troublesome. Yesterday, I breakfasted at one village and slept at another, where the gospel has never, as far as I could learn, been proclaimed by the living voice, or made known by the diffusion of the silent messengers of truth. I felt much interest, and had great pleasure in announcing to their inhabitants the 'glad tidings.'

"*Khed, Sabbath*, 12*th March*.—This is one of our old school stations, and a place well known to me. Like the towns on the coast, of which I before spoke, it is full of melancholy interest. But the little I have read to-day has served to bear up my mind and refresh my spirit. I have been reading Daniel, and the second and seventh chapters, bearing so directly on the progress and perfections of Christ's kingdom on earth, have had this happy effect."

The first great mercy of this year which the Mission had joyfully to acknowledge, was the rescue of the infant daughter of the elder Parsi convert. For four years the father had had his child withheld from him; he was not once permitted to see her; all his wishes respecting her were treated with utter scorn, and she was about to be

given away in marriage without the least intimation being conveyed to him.* An application was now made to the Supreme Court for a writ of Habeas Corpus. The court was perfectly decided in ruling that the child should be restored to her father. Mr Nesbit writes to Dr Brunton:—"The Parsi, and every other native community, are now made aware of two great laws affecting the interests of converts to Christianity. 1. Every person of sufficient age to judge for himself (the term is, I believe, fourteen years), is allowed, without any legal penalty, to follow his own choice in matters of religion. 2. A father, by changing his religion, does not forfeit his claim to the guardianship of his children. A third law was announced from the bench, although delay had unhappily frustrated its actual exemplification in this particular case. Marriage is not dissolved by what may be termed the *apostasy* of one of the parties. If they be pleased to dwell with each other, no third party is allowed in the least to interfere. We have abundant reason to admire and bless that Divine wisdom and goodness which have secured to Christianity in India these decisions and announcements."†

* The Parsis had been guilty of the exquisite cruelty of not only preventing him from seeing his wife, but of marrying her to another man.

† We give a few sentences from a Parsi paper, to shew the temper and style of the native press about this time:—

"We do not understand what advantage Hormazdji Pestonji expects by getting back his infant daughter. We only see that the missionaries want to heat the cool blood of the Parsis. Beyond this, there appears no advantage, so much as a piece of tile or a grain of sand. . . The present question is a grand and compassionate one,—namely, since the person who wants his infant daughter is an APOSTATE, will it not be injuring peace and violating right to give her to him? . . We are not now putting sulphur on fire, but we wish to quench the fire by doing what we can to remove the suffering which now a-days befals the Parsis. All our advices prove of no avail before English law, the power of the missionaries, and the lukewarmness of the Parsis. . . Many a grievous occurrence that has

The little one thus recovered was soon admitted into the Church of Christ by baptism. Writing to Dr Brunton, he says:—'I am still under the influence of the joy which we experienced in admitting Hormazdji's daughter into the visible church by baptism. Many a heart, I am sure, was lifted up in genuine, fervent prayer, when the little fire-worshipper stood at her father's right hand to receive the symbol of fellowship with 'the true and living God;' when the rescued slave of ignorance and superstition received the badge of the enlightened liberty of the 'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.'"

We may here introduce a note to this dear child, written only a few months before his death. It well shews the liveliness of his recollections of this period, and the deep interest he ever continued to feel towards her :—

"My Dearest Buchoobai,—I am afraid I shall never get you written to. I always meant to write you a good letter, and could never get time to do so. Now I must write you a bad one. But its badness is not for lack of love. You have much of that in my heart, and I pray that you may be loved of the Lord, and loved of all His people, in the highest sense. One of the saddest disruptions of the fall, is that which sometimes takes place between social and spiritual affection. Let it not be so between you and any of the spiritual family. Your father's house is dull without his Buchoo; and it seems now as if the home above could not be bright without you. Go with him, and be with him for ever. You will be then an everlasting joy to him, and to me, and to many more.

happened to the Parsi community since it left its native land for the preservation of its religion, may be forgotten; but the one that happened in the Supreme Court of Bombay, on Wednesday the 28th of February, must not be forgotten till the end of time."

"How I rejoiced to baptize you, as our little recovered jewel! How, now, should we rejoice over you as certainly baptized with the better baptism, as 'washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!'"

That great movement in the Scottish Church, which is so well known as "the Disruption," was now drawing on. The missionaries of the Church in Western India, like their brethren in the other Presidencies, had watched the state of things at home with intense solicitude. They had carefully chronicled the progress of the controversy in the pages of the *Oriental Christian Spectator*. They all heartily sympathised with the principles which were upheld by the majority of the Church, as represented by Chalmers, Gordon, Welsh, and others, and they had repeatedly given expression to their deep convictions. This had drawn forth much bitter invective from some of the Indian journals; nor did many of the pious members of the Church of England (between whom and the Mission there had all along existed a warm sympathy), seem easily to comprehend the paramount importance which was claimed for the "spiritual independence" of the Church of Christ. The future of the Mission was by no means clear. Could it be maintained by the Evangelical party, if compelled to quit the Establishment? What probability of that, when many ministers at home, who were preparing for conscience sake to leave their happy manses, were thinking of America, or the Colonies, as the probable scene of their future labours? Nevertheless, duty was plain; and sufficient unto the day was its allotted work. A letter of Mr Nesbit's explains the sentiments of himself and his brethren at this trying time. In answer to the Rev. Charles J. Brown, who had been directed

by a Provisional Committee to address a letter to the missionaries inquiring what course they intended to pursue, he writes:—

"*Bombay*, 16*th June* 1843.—My Dear Sir,—I had already expressed to Drs Gordon and Welsh my own feelings and purposes in connection with the impending crisis of the Church; my brethren here and at Poona had done the same; and we were anxiously waiting to receive a proposal or a response from you, when your welcome letter came to hand. Had not you taken us up, we should have been obliged to cast ourselves on the liberality of individuals in India and Britain, or to put ourselves under the patronage, if it would willingly afford it, of the London Missionary Society, whose original principles are sufficiently general to embrace a Presbyterian Mission. But we have already felt too much of the comfort and security, and enjoyed too much of the benefit, of a proper ecclesiastical connection between a Mission and the Church which supports and superintends it, to contemplate such an arrangement with any thing like satisfaction or joy. And now that it appears to be the will of the Church's Great Head thoroughly to 'purify and make her white,' our attachment grows into a love ardent and unquenchable. We begin to feel a confidence before unknown; and that confidence both establishes our hearts, and quickens our zeal.

"Your poverty, although it tries, does not alarm us; for we remember who hath said, 'I know thy poverty; but thou art rich.' The Church of Scotland *has been* 'rich' in prayer, and power, and fruitfulness; 'rich' in Israel's holy vehemence, and in blessings from the hand of Him who desires by that vehemence to be overcome; 'rich' in all the warnings of the law and invitations of the gospel: she has been so, and we cannot look back on such periods without a joyful hope

mingling with our sorrowful regrets. Why may she not again be what she once was? Scotland is now living on the deep and pervasive piety of bygone ages. Why may not her population become as generally and deeply devout as before? May the Lord support your evangelistic zeal!"

At the same time, he writes as follows:—

To Dr Chalmers.

"*Bombay, 17th June* 1843.—My Dear Dr Chalmers,—We are delighted to see, with your own *mysterious* signature, the postscript you append to the letter addressed to us by the Convener of the Provisional Committee. It assures us that the intensity of your desires in behalf of Scotland do not limit your desires, nor arrest your efforts. While you long and labour to see Scotland a spiritual garden, you desire and do your utmost that for the thorn the fir, and for the brier the myrtle, and for the wide waste the blossoming rose and the blooming trees of righteousness, may stand forth as 'the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified, throughout the earth. 'Let all the earth praise the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of Him. . . .

"If people in Scotland, surrounded by only two or three millions of men, feel at one time the sublimity, and at another the desperateness, of evangelising the whole, how much more must we be moved and crushed with similar feelings, surrounded as we are by scores of millions of atheists and idolaters! India looks a large inviting field from afar. But, when you come into it, where are you to begin, and what are you to do? Begun, and working hard, you see no fruit. Are you working right? Discouraged, you become, in a hostile climate, diseased and enfeebled too. Now you can neither effect anything, nor do anything; and all the depression of a sense of utter impotency and helplessness comes over the heart, and prostrates the soul.

Happy if the prostration lay it low before God, and open up an intercourse with heaven, whence light and strength may flow into it, and convincing and converting grace descend upon others. I am persuaded that much of the darkness and despondency we often experience arises from the vast undefinedness of the work before us, and the difficulty there is in selecting and settling down upon a single point, when our larger desires would at once stretch out and embrace the whole. . . . . .

"I well remember one of your wishes regarding your 'latter days,' expressed at a time when you were ardently instructing us in practical ethics. It was that you might be blessed with *a green old age*, spent in visiting from manse to manse, and aiding and advising in *parish economics*. Happy, indeed, we thought we should be, to receive into our houses our beloved instructor, coming as our valued friend, and the benefactor of our flocks, renewing all the interesting impressions of academical life, and carrying out with us, and for us, the lessons of former days. How altered the scene from the one we fondly pictured! Yet how substantially have you received the desire of your heart!"

A decided majority of the Presbyterian community in Bombay left the Established Church at the same time, and formed themselves into a congregation in union with the "Free Protesting Church of Scotland." Mr Nesbit and Mr Murray Mitchell were requested to act as pastors in the mean while; but an earnest request was sent home that a minister should at once be provided, and his passage-money was remitted without delay. Mr Nesbit writes:—

To the Rev. Dr Welsh.

"All the ruling elders of St Andrew's Church, of which I was one, left it to join the 'Free Protesting Church' in Bombay. We are four in number, Archibald Graham, Esq.,

Surgeon, Bombay Medical Establishment, N. Spencer, Esq., Mr A. D. Fallon, and myself. Out of seventy-five communicants, it is believed that sixty adhere to the Free Church. This is a small number, and unable, one would suppose, to build a church, or support a minister. Happily, however, a few of them are both able and willing to give largely to these objects.

"It was exceedingly painful to us to leave Mr Cook* to his desolate situation. Our intercourse with him was always of the most peaceful and harmonious nature, and this rendered the act of separation doubly distressing.

"The American Mission Chapel is, in the mean time, kindly granted for our use. Our Transatlantic brethren cordially sympathise with us in our present movement. We commenced our ministrations there, in connection with the 'Free Protesting Church,' on Sabbath last the 16th. I preached in the forenoon, from 'Christ faithful as a son over His own house,' and Mr Murray Mitchell in the evening, from 'If any one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.' It was a day of solemn joy. We sympathised with you in your 'sufferings,' and 'rejoiced' and gave thanks at the 'honour' done you; and above all, we sympathised with Christ in His injured supremacy, and praised and blessed the Lord that there were at least some that gave that 'chief corner-stone, elect, precious,' the place that is its due.

"I fear that the Church of Kandy, in Ceylon, will be lost to *freedom*, to the great regret of many of the subscribers."

It will be seen from the above that, while unhesitatingly and firmly maintaining their principles, Mr Nesbit and those who acted with him were earnestly solicitous that

* Minister of St Andrew's Church, Bombay.

nothing of personal unkindness to those who remained in the Establishment should be either expressed or entertained.

Regarding the Mission, Mr Nesbit writes on the 24th August to Dr Gordon, who was now Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church :—

"My Dear Dr Gordon,—I transmit to you such extracts from the correspondence between Dr Brunton and myself, as may serve to bring before you several important points in connection with our Mission. At the head of all stands an additional missionary for this station. If we are to take the lead in the Christian education of youth in Bombay, we must have a more constant and complete European superintendence in our Institution,—a warmer pervasion of it by European life and energy, and a greater extent of actual European instruction. The Government college and schools are carrying off the larger portion of the rising generation, destined to occupy the important position in society which superior knowledge gives; and they are plunging them in a scepticism which doubts and denies almost every thing but the truths of geometry, and the facts of physics. If we would cope with such rivals, we must be greatly and evidently superior to them. We must bring our pupils faster and better on. We must give them a more solid education. We must send them out far better fitted for the duties of this life, and infinitely better furnished in reference to the life to come. But all this will depend not only on the character, but on the number, of the teachers who unite their energies to promote such a result. And this, it will be borne in mind, is not nearly the half of our work. We have preaching to the natives in their own language, both in doors and out of doors, both on the Lord's day and on other days of the week; we write and revise tracts for them, and distribute them to them; we cannot avoid taking our

part in the translation of the Scriptures; we superintend schools for native children of both sexes, some Gentile and other Jewish; we have lectures and lessons at our own houses for the more advanced pupils of our Institution, and others who may accompany them; we conduct the studies of candidates for missionary labour; we keep the press in active operation for the instruction of the natives, and the good of our own countrymen. Without a larger number of missionaries, and a greater division of labour, every missionary in Bombay feels constrained to make himself acquainted with Hinduism, Muhammadanism, and Parsiism, and to learn Marathi, Hindustani, and Gujarati. With these multiplied engagements, we have but little time or strength for each. We therefore long for an increase of labourers."

It will be seen from the above extract, that the fears of the missionaries as to the inability of the Free Church to maintain her position in the heathen field, were graciously disappointed. All the Missions were continued in unabated strength; and, ere long, there was a measure of extension. Still the trials connected with the Disruption were not small. For example, the Mission had long hopefully looked forward to occupying a spacious building that was in the course of erection for the English Institution, the pupils of which, in the mean time, were most wretchedly accommodated. But the new building was claimed by the Established Church; and with it went library, apparatus, school furniture, &c. &c. Our readers will understand Mr Nesbit's feelings on this subject, when he says :—

"The new Institution is now roofing. It is, even in its unfinished state, a magnificent and beautiful object. . . . . We can hardly help heaving a deep sigh every time we pass it."

His earnest hope—his fervent prayer—was, that the Free Church of Scotland might be, from the first, heart and soul a missionary church, thrusting forth her labourers to the heathen field with something of that indomitable zeal, and high self-sacrifice, which she had manifested in her contendings for the truth at home. He writes to Dr Gordon :—

"I rejoice to hear of the impulse that has been given to the missionary spirit in Scotland, by the universal adherence of her Presbyterian missionaries to the 'Free Church. May the Disruption mark a new era alike at home and abroad! May we not only be blessed with a greater disposition to labour, but what is still more needed, a more humble and more ardent spirit of prayer! The advance of the missionary cause in India is, in general, very much overrated; and we are often presenting the thanksgivings of those who are 'rich and increased in goods,' while we should be pouring out the 'prayer of the destitute' 'with strong crying and tears.' The burden of a 'world lying in wickedness,' and the piercing reproach of an almost universally dishonoured God, ought to call forth struggles and exertions, gifts and sacrifices, far more effectually than anything else. 'Out of the depths have I called unto thee, O Jehovah. O Jehovah, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.'"

CHAPTER IX.

BAPTISM OF A BRAHMAN—SHRIPAT—COMMOTION AMONG THE NATIVES—NATIVE INFIDELITY—PROFESSOR HENDERSON.

In the month of September this year, an important event occurred—the baptism of a Brahman youth, Náráyan Sheshadri. This was the first instance of the conversion of an *educated* Brahman in connection with the Mission. Narayan was well known in Bombay; and the excitement occasioned by his baptism was exceedingly great. The Institution sank very low,—every Brahman pupil, and nearly all those of the higher castes, were instantly withdrawn. The vernacular schools, both male and female, were, for the time, all but destroyed. The convulsion was like that connected with the Parsi baptisms in 1839, only somewhat less violent; and again, much of the toilsome work of years was overthrown in a moment.

As soon as Narayan had declared his intentions, a young brother, Shrípat, "one of the sweetest and most intelligent boys I have ever seen," said Mr Nesbit,—and one of the most promising of the junior pupils in the Institution,—was kept in close confinement by his father, as he was known to share Narayan's sentiments. He escaped, however, and fled to take refuge with his brother in the mission-house. He, too, begged for baptism; but the missionaries, not seeing suffi-

cient evidence of a change of heart, declined to give it at that time. He was little more than twelve years of age; and legal proceedings were by and by instituted by his father, with a view to recover the boy. To this he was evidently urged by other parties. On hearing of Narayan's baptism, he had come from some distance to Bombay; and in his interview with his sons had seemed reconciled to his "written destiny." He merely requested that the elder brother might still contribute to his support as he had been doing;—the younger he neither claimed, nor asked to go with him. Had it not been for the interference of some who had resolved to contest every inch of ground with advancing Christianity, the brothers would have quietly continued to live and study together; and the intercourse with their parents, never wholly broken off, would, ere long, have become kindly, and not unfrequent.

The case was intensely interesting, not only in relation to Shripat himself, but to many other youthful candidates for baptism. At what age shall freedom of conscience be allowed? According to Manu, a Hindu is of age at sixteen, so far as inheriting property is concerned; but the legislator never contemplated the possibility of a Hindu changing his religion, and is silent on the subject. The missionaries, after taking advice of able counsel, went into Court with a strong hope of dear Shripat's being left to choose his own place of abode. But they were disappointed. Both judges agreed that the boy must be handed over to his father,—the opinion of a child only twelve years old being, according to the Puisne judge, Sir Erskine Perry, "not worth a farthing."* When judgment was pronounced, poor

* In 1849, at Vizagapatam, in a similar case of conversion, the magistrate, Mr Smollet, declared that the control of Hindu parents over male children continues up to the age of eighteen; and that the parents have a

Shripat started up, and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "But am I to be compelled to worship idols?" To this sorrowful question no answer was returned. Mr Nesbit was greatly attached to Shripat; and when the weeping boy bade him farewell as they quitted the court-house, he kissed him with much affection, and wept with him.

Shripat was immediately put into close confinement, and no message of any sort was allowed to pass between Narayan and him. Every means was taken to shake his attachment to Christianity; but the effort, according to native confession, was for a long time in vain.*

right to administer "suitable correction" to enforce obedience. A dreary prospect for multitudes of native youth, whose minds and hearts have been quickened by the gospel, were this to be law! But the weight of judicial authority is against such views. In 1847, at Madras, Sir Edward Gambier declared there was no specific age at which freedom of choice was given, but that (in Lord Denman's words) "when an infant is brought before the Court by *Habeas Corpus*, if he be of an age to exercise a choice, the Court leaves him to elect where he will go." His Lordship, then adverting to the case of Shripat, said, "I entertain sincere respect for the eminent judges of Bombay; but I feel it my duty to dissent from their views on this point. I know that a different opinion from theirs is entertained both at Calcutta and here." Still more strongly spoke Sir William Burton; characterising the views of the Bombay Puisne Judge as "most arbitrary," "most extraordinary." A case also occurred in 1847 in Calcutta, in which Sir Lawrence Peel took the same view as the Madras judges of the legal bearings of such questions. Such authorities, it may be hoped, will have due weight given them in future cases. There has already been great suffering inflicted by Hindu relatives on many youths who, convinced of the sin of indolatry, feel that they must obey God rather than man. A remarkable case occurred in connection with the Nagpore Mission in 1848. It is right that Christians in this favoured land should know and sympathise with the trials of these young confessors.

* Deeply afflicting as the case was, the extraordinary language in which the natives alluded to it would compel a smile. One paper said—(we quote from memory, but the reference is almost verbally exact),—"As you cannot straighten a dog's tail by confining it in an iron tube, or prevent it, the moment it is set free, from resuming its natural curl, so the dog's tail of this boy's understanding refuses to be rectified by any means or appliances at our command."

Shripat had, of his own accord, broken caste by partaking of food with his brother; and now the question began to agitate the Brahmanical community, "Can he be purified and restored to caste?" Violent discussions followed. Meetings without end were held. The overwhelming majority declared his restoration to caste impossible; but an active minority took an opposite view, and endeavoured to obtain the support of the Brahmans of Poona, Nasik, Benares, and other holy cities. Hereupon, the former party excommunicated the latter. It was most interesting to watch the fierce controversy which raged for nearly two years, and afforded singular revelations of Hindu mind. Mr Nesbit writes to Dr Gordon:—

". . . . It is wonderful to see how the case of this little boy has agitated Brahmanism throughout India. It not only affects all the Maratha Brahmans, colonies of whom are to be found in every considerable town of India, except perhaps towards the extreme south, but all those Brahmans who, though of a different nation and speaking a different language, have the privilege of eating and drinking with them. The case is known and canvassed throughout this vast circle, and every place of note has not only partisans but agents on both sides. Vast sums of money have been expended by the rich minority who desire to bring Hinduism, and Hindu practices, to something of a reasonable shape and tenor, and vast artifice and exertions have been used by the multitudinous majority to preserve Hinduism in its ancient purity and power."

Another question agonisingly interesting was, What is to become of poor Shripat himself? Mr Nesbit writes to Dr Gordon in February 1844:—

"The case of Narayan's little brother is as dark as when I wrote to you. It is almost certain that the Brahmans

will agree to receive him into caste after a pilgrimage to the holy city (Benares), and the requisite ablutions in the sacred river. We are told that he has consented to go through the penance that may be imposed; and we can hardly expect that, having once yielded, he should now or at the last offer any resistance. Those about him, however, seem to have little confidence in the strength or stability of his altered views or feelings, as they will not permit Narayan to converse for a moment with his brother, or so much as catch a glimpse of his countenance.

"The purpose of those who send him to Benares is two-fold. They mean, by variety and change of scenes and associations, to divert his mind from the persons and subjects that have so engaged his attention and affections for some time past. Sanskrit learning and Brahmanical honour are also to be set before him; and these, it is expected, will have a beneficial effect in divorcing him from his present attachments. In other language, better understood in England and Scotland, he is to be sent to a watering-place and read novels, in order to cure him of the religious mania, or melancholy, that has so unaccountably come over him. On the other hand, a journey to Benares, and a course of bathing in the Ganges, present the most likely means of his purification. For myself, however, I cannot help thinking that the first object is uppermost in the minds of the liberal Brahmans of Bombay. Our anxiety on account of Shripat is not at all abated. We know not what a day may bring forth; and what, we naturally ask, may the years bring forth which must pass away before the years of legal restraint is ended! 'With God,' however, 'all things are possible,' and the preservation of the 'little one' unto His kingdom of grace on earth, and His kingdom of glory in heaven, is one of these things. May He cause 'the wrath of

man to praise Him,' and the devices of His enemies to work out His holy and benevolent designs!"

Finally, it was found to be impossible, even for the sacred Gangá (Ganges) herself, to cleanse away the guilt of having eaten forbidden food. The young man remained an outcast, living indeed in his father's house, but never sharing in the family meal. The conservative party of the Brahmans were triumphant; and they compelled those who had sought to restore Shripat to caste, to submit to humiliating penances. The priest who had commenced his purification at the bidding of the *liberal* party was very roughly handled; besmearings, ablutions, potions of the "five products of the cow," many and frightful, were requisite to cleanse him. The rest of the liberal party got off more easily; they confessed publicly their fault, and drank water in which an idol had been washed, and one or two Brahmans had dipped their right foot. This was a great diminution of the penance originally required; but it was found by the orthodox party that contamination had befallen themselves, for some of them had eaten with one, who had eaten with another, who had eaten with somebody else, who had eaten with the erring section. So it was found expedient to hush the matter up, and the breach between the conservatives and reformers was, in a measure, healed. It was a notable proof of the unbroken power of old unalleviated Hinduism.

As for poor Shripat himself, he remained a considerable time in Benares and its neighbourhood, where he was plied with every kind of argument by the Maratha Brahmans, including the near relatives of the Ex-Peshwá. Before he returned, his attachment to Christianity was greatly shaken; nor is he a Christian at the present time. We have dwelt thus somewhat minutely on his case, as an illustration of the keen disappointments that often befal the missionary. Of

many bright and promising blossoms that delight his eye, how few are matured into fruit!

Narayan at the time of his baptism was a very fair English scholar. His first lessons in that language had been obtained in the Poona mission school, and for five years he had studied in the English Institution in Bombay. His heart's desire was to preach the gospel of salvation among his benighted countrymen. Soon after his baptism, Mr Nesbit wrote to Dr Gordon:—

"We, with the young Brahmanical convert himself, entertain and cherish hopes and prospects respecting his future engagements and usefulness as a minister of the gospel. It may be four years before he is ready to fill the office of a preacher. If you will kindly consider him as a student of divinity, and make provision for him accordingly, we shall feel much gratified, and be in an advantageous position to follow out one of the greatest objects of our mission. I refer to that of rearing up young and able preachers to carry the gospel to multitudes of their fellow-countrymen."

Narayan was not alone in these important studies. We read in the Report of the mission for 1843:—"Along with Mr Cassidy, the European head-master in our Institution, Hormazdji and Narayan are now diligently prosecuting their theological studies. . . . . Dhanjibhai, who accompanied Dr Wilson to Europe, has been enrolled as a theological student of the Free Church College in Edinburgh." The course of study prosecuted in the Bombay theological class was made as complete as circumstances allowed. Both of the missionaries shared, and were deeply interested in the teaching. Mr Nesbit taught Systematic Theology, and the Exegesis of the New Testament. The system of teaching was (to use a well-known distinction) tutorial rather than professorial. Mr Nesbit used Hill's Lectures as his prin-

cipal text-book in Systematic Theology, and expounded the work with his characteristic closeness and fulness. For the critical interpretation of the New Testament he was also well qualified.

In the month of July 1844, at a meeting of Presbytery in Poona, at which Mr Nesbit presided, Mr James Aitken was ordained to the office of the Holy Ministry. He had arrived from Scotland in 1840 to labour in connection with the Poona branch of the mission.

Mr Nesbit's health again seemed to give way towards the end of the year; and he paid a visit to the city of Surat, proceeding overland. Intimation of his departure on his tour was immediately issued by the watchful Brahmans of Bombay, who sounded an alarm to the inhabitants of the districts he was to traverse, in the following characteristic terms:—"Padre Nesbit has gone on a tour, with some seven or eight boxes of missionary books. We wish the gentleman no harm; but may Heaven grant that his books be stolen. Whoever are competent to argue with him, we beg them to treat him to the same fare as the Supreme Court lately did. If we act rightly, Government is on our side; so let his books be reduced to dust . . . Think nothing of his white skin; fear him not. Treat him as one of the vulgar, and upset all his undertakings."

The following notices occur in his letters about this time:—

"As an example of part of the effect which the presence and pressure of Christianity produce on men of inferior education, I may relate what I witnessed a few days ago.

"While seated at table with my family, between eight and nine in the evening, I was gratified by the appearance of a native friend whom I had not seen for many months. I was struck, however, with the timid and stealth-like man-

ner with which he entered the room, and asked him, with some concern, whether all was well. 'All is well,' said he; 'but I want a little private conversation with you.'

"My visitor, I may here observe, is a man of grave manners and respectable character, and is employed in one of the Government offices as an English clerk. Till about the time of Narayan's baptism, he had long and regularly waited upon me every Lord's day to read the Scriptures. 'About a year ago,' said he, 'I was brought into great trouble, and I took refuge in the thought that Christ might grant me deliverance. I accordingly made a vow that, if He would deliver me, I would render Him thanks and praise, and make a present to His temple of two rupees. He did deliver me, and my vow has long lain a heavy burden on my conscience. I now commit this sum to you, that you may offer it in the temple of Christ with appropriate praises and thanksgivings to His name.'

"It is not unusual in Hindus to make vows to other gods (or those that they esteem such) besides their own. They are often seen mingling with the Muhammadans at their great annual procession in the Muharram. They take that occasion of fulfilling the promises they may have made to Mohammad, or to Mohammad's unhappy grandsons. The family of a Hindu so *catholic*, view his conduct without suspicion or alarm. Christianity is viewed, however, with deeper awe and greater dread. Vows are, in consequence, seldomer made to Christ; and the making and fulfilling of them, in the present state of things in Bombay, would mark out a man for reproach and persecution. Hence my native friend's delay in the fulfilment of his vow, and his desire to have it kept secret.*

* Yet vows are often made, and openly paid, to the Virgin by the heathen; and the Romanist priests receive the offering. We have often seen

"The difficulties, he thought, were all on his side. Great therefore was his surprise and grief to find that I had my difficulties too. 'I cannot,' I said, 'present your offering; neither can I render thanksgiving in the form in which you wish it. Christ must have *you* before He will have your offering. He must have your heart before He will have your thanksgivings. Why do you not seek Him as your Saviour, and surrender yourself at once and altogether, and for ever to *Him?*' 'How can I?' he replied,—'the members of my family begin to suspect me already. What am I to do with my parents? My becoming a Christian would break their hearts. But will you not do this service for me?' 'I cannot,' I rejoined. 'Very well,' said he; 'I will myself give these rupees to the poor in the name of Christ, and I shall be clear of my vow.' I pointed out the passages of Scripture which forbid a double mind. He granted the propriety of all I read and advanced, but, like the young man in the Gospel, confessed that he could not follow it, and like him, too, 'went sorrowfully away.' . . . .

"I had lately an opportunity of seeing and conversing with one of the humbled Princes of India. He appeared exceedingly gratified by my visit, and took in good part all that I said in reference to the exclusive claims of Christ as a mediator between God and man. He had received a Persian New Testament from a missionary friend, and he made willing and ready reference to it in a part of our argument. I had the pleasure of giving him a large and able refutation of Muhammadanism, written in the Persian language, and subsequently of hearing from himself that he was interested in the perusal of it. It is thus that good mingles with evil, and natural distress not only brings a

such offerings with our own eyes in the church of our Lady of the Mountain (Nossa Senhora de Monte), near Bombay.

man spiritual advantages, but induces a disposition to avail himself of them."

The members of the Mission sought to visit any unhappy men who might be under sentence of death. Such visits often gave sorrowfully instructive revelations of human nature. They were also impressed with the fact, that Europeans were almost invariably awed by the approach of death; whereas natives often manifested a hardened indifference or appalling levity. Mr Nesbit writes:—

"In attending to the spiritual interests of five natives lately condemned to death, we were particularly struck with the darkness and grossness of the native mind. One of them, a young Muhammadan of twenty, complained that he was taken away at the beginning of his days, before he had well begun to eat, or to drink, or to enjoy himself, and expressed a bitter regret that death had not come upon him after he had somewhat satiated himself with these enjoyments. From our frequent and pressing explanations and entreaties on the subject of sin and salvation, he ever defended himself as from a disquieting and dangerous evil, and the shield he held up for his defence was, 'One God, and Muhammad the prophet of God.' . . . . He was lamenting over losses which Muhammad's paradise would far more than supply. But somehow he could not see its delicious repasts or refreshing banquets, or other delights. All was dimness and darkness before him, all loss and privation. It is well that the belief of that lie is so difficult, even to Mussalmans themselves.

"The four others condemned to death were Parsis; and the firmness with which they kept hold of their own religion, even in the prospect of death, was as remarkable in their case as in that of the Muhammadan. It was in vain for us

to tell them that they needed a great surety and advocate, and that their religion gave none. 'The God that sits above,' said they, 'is everything to us. He will save us.' Three of these men were respited; but one was led out to execution on the day appointed. His priest washed his body, as is done in preparation for an ordinary death, and then told him that nothing more remained to complete his purification than a free and full confession of his crime. The man made it; and 'now,' said he, 'I am clean, soul and body.' . . . He walked firmly to the foot of the scaffold, firmly ascended the ladder, firmly stood on the platform, and in an easy and natural manner addressed the spectators, asking forgiveness, I presume, of any whom he might have offended; calmly looked up to the noose that hung over his head, and audibly laughed to see it prepared to receive him."

There was at this time a large amount of interest displayed among the Natives in connection with religion. The Native mind was now thoroughly alarmed at the progress of Christianity, not so much on account of its actual conquests, as at what appeared the subtle, secret influence which it was diffusing over the youthful mind in Bombay. Nor in Bombay alone. At Nasik the Church of England Mission, and at Ahmednuggur the American Mission, were both making steady progress; and from Gujarat the natives heard from time to time tidings that confirmed them in their fears. New publications were started, both by Hindus and Parsis, for religious controversy. As far as possible they now avoided discussion on their own systems; they ever sought to act on the offensive, and vehemently assailed Christianity. The works of the coarser European infidels were ransacked for arguments; the exploded fallacy which could no longer hold up its head in Europe, required to be

exploded once more. Mr Nesbit, in 1832, as we have seen, had fondly cherished the hope that the infidelity that had desolated the youthful mind of Calcutta might not appear in Bombay. But these hopes had been grievously disappointed. He writes on this subject to Dr Gordon :—

"I have kept up my weekly lecture. The most hopeful of the pupils of the Government school continue to attend. The immediate subject of discussion in the course having been brought to a close, I shall now diverge in a direction which circumstances seem distinctly to point out. The 'enemy has come in like a flood' in that direction, and there we must lift up a standard against him. Vain, indeed, will our efforts be unless 'the Spirit of the Lord' be the grand director and mover of all.

"The 'flood' of opposition I refer to, is that which has set in against the very foundations of Christianity,—that which seeks to undermine its simple credibility. To my personal knowledge, the natives inquire after the names of all infidel English authors, and do so with the determined purpose of having them all ordered out from England. The 'Native's Friend," conducted by Mr M. Mitchell, contains a specimen of their argumentation. In lecturing on the 'Evidences of the Truth of Christianity," I will not confine myself, however, to the external, but shall dwell probably at much greater length on the internal. May He inform and replenish us, that we may think and speak aright; and may He 'open the hearts' of those to whom we speak, that they may receive and embrace the truth."

Public lectures on the relative claims of Hinduism and Christianity, were about this time commenced by the Hindus, —the chief lecturer being a very able Pundit, who had been much in contact with the missionaries. Mr Nesbit writes :—

"*October* 1844.—Last Saturday night I attended a Brah-

manical lecture. The master of the house in which it was that evening given, very politely admitted me as a hearer. The lecturer, strange to say, was [formerly] a Pundit of our own; and he was holding forth on subjects various,—the innocence of Krishna's* 'apparent' immoralities, the daily motion of the sun, the operations of bees, the destruction of hives, and the formation of wax candles. His English information supplied a great part of his lecture, and modified the whole. In the presence of a Christian he refrained from all such attacks on Christianity as had been *reported* on former occasions. He only tacitly referred to the miraculous birth of Christ, and inquired in reference to Krishna's misdeeds, what was the difference between a birth by the power of God, and a birth by God; declaring that, in neither case, there was any comparison with births among men. Christianity thus obliges him and his pupils to refine. His explanation of the sun going round Mount Meru, as the Hindu legends say he does, instead of going over our heads and under the earth as he actually appears to do, partook of the same character of mingled 'barbarian' and Brahmanical learning. . . . . At the close I was permitted to make remarks on the whole in the presence of the lecturer. I endeavoured to point out the false principles on which he had endeavoured to vindicate the worst of the Hindu gods, and the necessity of the true knowledge of God to salvation."

Again, in November:—

"The Brahmanical lecture which I mentioned in my last, I continue to attend alone or with Mr M. Mitchell. The lecturer still refrains from any open or gross attack on Christianity; but there is a covert degrading of Christianity to the level of Hinduism, or an elevating of Hinduism above Christianity, which many of the hearers understand. The close

* One of the Hindu gods.

of these lectures always gives room for wholesome discussion, and not unfrequently for a full statement of evangelical truth."

Mr Nesbit had frequently occasion to refer to the effect of religious instruction on the hearts of those who did not openly profess themselves Christians. Of the pupils of the mission schools, very few were baptised; what of the rest? Were they better, or as some said, worse than before? On this point Mr Nesbit's experience led him to render emphatic testimony. He says:

"There is a great difference between the natives who have been for a considerable time under instruction in Christian institutions, and those who have received no such advantages. Although their education does not bring the former class salvation, it gives them a conscience, a fear of God as Judge, and a dread of the issues of death,—feelings unknown to their countrymen. One of our more advanced pupils, having a few days ago the prospect of death before him, trembled with all the lively apprehensions of one who had heard of the awfulness of judgment and eternity from his childhood. These are preparations for saving impression,—the signs of a better and brighter day."

He writes on the same important question about a year afterwards:

"In conversing with, and addressing, the natives generally, it is interesting to observe the difference between them and the pupils of our Institution [or other Christian seminaries]. In the case of the former, you seem to speak to men who have no perception of sin—none of the finer moral feelings—nothing of the moral principle. In the case of the latter, you find moral perception awake—the conscience quickened—and the finer feelings in exercise."

We are here reminded of a remark which we do not find

in his papers, but which not unfrequently fell from his lips, to the effect that, when an educated youth talked English, he generally talked far more sensibly than he did in Marathi. It was not merely that the Marathi language seemed *paganised*, and with difficulty to enunciate the thoughts of a higher civilisation and purer faith; but the very use of his mother tongue revived the ideas and style of thinking with which it had been associated in the student's earlier days. The remark is doubtless just; and the subject might repay farther examination.

A remarkable circumstance occurred soon afterwards. Professor Henderson of the Elphinstone College,—a man of high character and attainments, and very successful as an instructor of youth—came to the conclusion, that, as a Christian man, he could no longer remain connected with the Government system of education. His reasons are given in the following letter to Mr Nesbit;—

"*Bombay*, 10*th Sept.* 1844.—My Dear Mr Nesbit,—You requested me to state to you in writing the grounds of my dissatisfaction with my present engagement, and my desire to obtain some other employment. I might do so briefly by saying, that I feel uncomfortable under a conviction which is daily becoming stronger, that I am instrumental in working out a system which, whatever may be my intentions, or those of others, has hitherto done more harm than good, and must eventually, if not radically changed, or powerfully counteracted, produce the most fearful and pernicious results. I have sometimes heard it objected to the Government system of education, that it is doing evil that good may come. I do not regard it in that light. On the contrary, I know that the intention has always been to do direct and immediate good; in fact, all the immediate good

which it was believed could be done under existing circumstances. But under these narrow views of expediency, a misshapen and incongruous system, without principle and without object, is growing up into gigantic dimensions, giving shelter, and nourishment, and support, to all manner of unsound and destructive opinions. It is an undoubted fact, which is forcing itself upon my notice more and more every day, that young men educated in the Government schools, whether through the medium of the English or native languages, grow up in disregard and contempt of all religion whatever,—that all of them, with scarcely an exception, take up the idea that religion is a subject on which no information that is certain or worth having is attainable, —that one religion is as good as another,—that all inquiry into the truth of any religion is only vexation of spirit, or waste of time; and any earnestness on the subject, a mark of superstition and of a want of common sense. As they advance in years, they become more confirmed in these opinions and in the practices to which they naturally lead, while the new desires to which their studies have given birth, and the new ideas they have got of their own importance, and of their superiority in knowledge to the mass of their countrymen, and, as they sometimes imagine, to the rulers of the country, tend to produce dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, and determined hostility to the Government under which they live, and to whose bounty they owe the smattering of knowledge of which they are so proud, and many of them the means of their subsistence. In minds so constituted the fear of God can find no place, and into such the doctrines of the Cross can find no entrance. It therefore appears to me that the Government system of education, in its anxiety to do a little immediate good, is opening the way to enormous evils, and throwing obstruc-

tions in the way of the greatest of all good,—in short, that truth from which all earthly good flows, the belief that 'God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that all who should believe on Him might have eternal life.' Painful experience has convinced me that this great truth cannot be introduced by a side wind; that it cannot take root, if made a subordinate object in any system of education; and that it is not enough, then, that it be not directly excluded, or that it be indirectly held up to admiration as a doctrine which has done good, and may be proved to the satisfaction of those who will take the trouble of examining it; but that every system of instruction in which it is not assumed as a fundamental truth, to be confirmed and illustrated by every other, that God has been manifested in the flesh, and that men can become truly enlightened, amiable, and happy, only by becoming living members of His spiritual body,—is radically wrong, and can eventually be productive only of that which is opposed to the 'glory of God in the highest on earth, peace on earth and goodwill to men.' I intended saying something of the changes which my opinions on this subject have undergone, as facts developed themselves before me; but this letter has already become too long, and I shall conclude by requesting an interest in your prayers before the throne of grace, and assuring you that I remain, yours affectionately,

WM. HENDERSON."

Mr Nesbit writes on this subject to Dr Gordon :—

"Mr Henderson is a man of superior talents and great attainments, especially in the direction of history and general literature. He has had much experience in the education of youth, and as a teacher he appears to be much liked. He has sometimes indulged the hope that he might effectually promote the interests of true religion by remaining

in connection with the Government Institution. But notwithstanding all his thoughts and wishes, the conviction has forced itself upon him, that the Government system is doing much more evil than good; that his single efforts as a private individual cannot counteract this tendency or effect; and that, by continuing in connection with it, he is lending himself to the advancement of evil. With these views, he is beset with difficulties in his present position, which conscience forbids him to overlook or overcome; and he sees no escape from them except by abandoning it altogether. He naturally looks to us. He is of one mind with us as a Christian man and a Christian teacher. When he accepted his present situation, his principles and feelings were very different from these; but, within the last three or four years, he has been the subject of a great though gradual change. His willingness to give up a large salary, and to take one of about only half the amount, amply confirms other testimonies to the genuineness and strength of his religious principles. In a day when truth is demonstrated by action, and error exposed and reprobated by suffering, it is cheering to see the same testimony lifted up in India as in Scotland. I may add, that Mr Webb, the president of our 'Financial Board,' is exceedingly delighted to hear of Mr Henderson's purposes, and hopes they may be fully carried out."

Professor Henderson solicited and found employment in connection with the Mission Institution. From of old he had been an intimate and valued friend of all the members of the mission, and the accession of such a man was on every account a cheering event. The Church at home gladly accepted his offer. He threw himself with great energy into his new duties, taking on himself what the ordained missionaries had always sighed to be released from

—details connected with mere secular studies. Let us note in passing, that until at least one thoroughly trained European educationist, not ordained to the holy ministry, is connected with the Institution, the mission-staff is sorrowfully incomplete, and all the branches of the work must suffer in consequence.

We may mention, in this connection, that the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Arthur, was present in 1845 at an examination of the Mission Institution at Poona. We express, doubtless, the all but universal sentiment of those who have formed an opinion on the subject, when we say that Sir George was one of the most painstaking, upright, and sagacious governors that the Western Presidency has seen. The sentiments of such a man, filling such a post, are worthy of all attention. Mr Nesbit thus records them :—

"The pupils, both in the English and vernacular departments, gave good evidence of the diligence and success of their teachers. The Governor was present while the English school was under examination, and expressed himself highly delighted with the system of education, and much satisfied with the results. He has not yet seen our Institution at Bombay, but proposes to visit it, as soon as he returns from the Deccan. He openly and strongly declares his disapprobation of the system pursued by Government, in excluding the Scriptures and all reference to the doctrines and evidences of Christianity. He desires very much to see a book on the Evidences, particularly those derived from prophecy, drawn out in the most simple and convincing form for the educated natives of India. This desire we hope soon to see met and satisfied."

CHAPTER X.

COMMENCEMENT OF NAGPORE MISSION—LETTERS TO NATIVE YOUTH—ISRAELITE SCHOOLS—LETTERS ON AFFLICTION—FEMALE EDUCATION.

Mr Nesbit's papers next advert to a most interesting and important topic, the establishment of a mission at Nagpore in Central India. A pious officer in the East India Company's service had, in 1842, communicated through Dr Wilson of Bombay his desire that a mission should be established at Nagpore, and had offered a sum of upwards of £2600 to found it. The Free Church of Scotland gratefully accepted this munificent gift; and in the end of 1844, the Rev. Stephen Hislop, with his wife, arrived in Bombay, designated to labour at Nagpore. Mr Nesbit writes to Dr Gordon :—

"We have had the great pleasure of welcoming to India our dear friends Mr and Mrs Hislop. . . . . We could have wished to have prolonged our joy in receiving a fellow-labourer to the Indian field, by keeping him a few months with us, and furnishing him for his particular sphere of labour. But a journey even during the first part of the rainy season was generally thought hazardous; and the alternative thus became, go now, or go twelvemonths hence. It was unanimously agreed by the Presbytery that Mr Hislop should go now, and that Mr Murray Mitchell should

accompany him. In regard to the mode of his conducting the mission at Nagpore, we would give no specific recommendations. At Poona and Amednuggur, education and preaching are combined, and pursued with nearly equal vigour. We have suggested that he will probably find himself providentially led to adopt the same system. Mr Mitchell and he will, however, be better able to form a correct judgment on the spot; and Mr Hislop himself will be still better able to decide after a few years' residence. We would earnestly unite with you in prayer that he may long be spared to 'make full proof of his ministry,' and that he may soon be joined by well-qualified and like-minded coadjutors."

The planting of a mission in the vast howling wilderness of Central India, is a most inviting theme to enlarge upon; but we constrain ourselves to pass it by. Suffice it to say, that during their journey to Nagpore, occupying six weeks, the missionaries had occasion to pass through countless towns and villages, where the name of Christ was utterly unknown. The following lines, written at the time, may be worth insertion, as expressing something of the feeling with which the moral desolation of the scene oftentimes wellnigh overwhelmed them:—

Sonnet—written in Central India, February 1845.

MATTHEW IX. 36—"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd."

Compassion filled Thy heart, and moved Thy speech,
Divine Redeemer! when Thou didst behold
The multitude of hapless men of old
In error lost, with none the truth to teach;
Like sheep within the fell destroyer's reach—
Strayed from the shepherd far, and the sheepfold.
Give me Thy heart, O Christ! thy love untold,

That I like Thee may pity, like Thee may preach.
Lo! mightier multitudes, amid a waste
Wildered, more drear than moved Thy soul to sadness;
Nor even a few poor drops of this world's gladness
Are India's fainting sons allowed to taste.
Unbroke by one lone glimmer is her gloom,—
No joy hath she on earth, or hope beyond the tomb.

We merely add that Mr Hislop has, from that time till now, been able to remain at his post, abundant in labours, and exposed to dangers threatening even life, yet graciously preserved in the midst of them all. He was joined early in 1847 by the Rev. Robert Hunter, who zealously co-operated with him, until his health failed in 1855.

Mr Nesbit writes to Mr Hislop while on his way to Nagpore:—

"*Jan.* 1845. . . . We have just got our Tract Society's Annual Meeting over, and I have something of a breathing time. Yet ever new business presses, and I have but little time to write. I think you understand the life we live here; how unphilosophic—how uncontemplative—how unquiet—how intensely crowded and crushed, confused, and disturbed! In these circumstances we cannot write you a good letter, and you cannot expect one. I am sorry to say that my beloved wife, who would gladly have sent forth her statements and strains, has been almost laid up since the day you left us. . . . We rejoiced to hear that you had got so well on. Surely the Ghauts awakened the latent poetry of your soul. . . . If the Ghauts have not aroused the feeling, I despair of the flat, tame Deccan doing it. My only hope will be in, 'Come with me to Lebanon, come with me to Lebanon, to the dens of the lions, and to the mountains of the leopards.' Come with me to awful sublimities before unseen and unfelt, and see and feel them

now. But why do I speak thus? You have seen better and higher sublimities than Lebanon, and Mahabuleshwar, and the Blue Mountains. You have seen and felt the grandeurs of infinite majesty, and holiness, and mercy, and condescension. Go with 'the chief among ten thousand,' and see them yet again, till your soul kindle into rapture, and till all nature is both seized, and yet cast away, as a picture of the scene." . . .

To THE SAME.

". . . How shall I thank you for your long letters? I will notice them soon. The fact is, that in this metropolis we have calls upon us, and stops and interruptions without number and without end. . . . Your account of the state of Nagpore is most interesting . . . A thousand thanks for your article for the *Oriental Christian Spectator*. May you be spared and blessed long to furnish the religious intelligence of Central India. Tell me how would you answer a native who should object to the sufferings of the lower animals as impugning the justice of God. 'Why do they suffer?' says he. 'Because the whole creation is under the curse on account of the sin of man.' To this may he not reply, 'If beasts suffer for man's sin, may not man be suffering for another being's sin?' If you say God has a right to give pleasure or pain to his creatures, do you not give him room to reply, 'That is just what we say, God has a right to do what he pleases, and why then do you find fault with this or the other doing of His, as narrated in the Puranas?' Tell me how you would conduct or cut short the argument in a case of this kind."

The above reminds us how ready Mr Nesbit ever was to aid his junior colleagues in the inquiries and studies requisite to equip them fully for their great calling. In the same way, in his correspondence with his brethren who had

been longer in the field, he was always delighted to exchange suggestions as to their common work. Thus, too, he was always glad to give, or get, a Sanskrit *shloka*, or any quotation from the Hindu books, which could be turned to account in religious discussion.

It was already mentioned that the missionaries acted as pastors of the European congregation connected with the Free Church of Scotland in Bombay. They had much encouragement in this work, and were cheered with evidence that some had been brought to receive the truth in the love of it, under their ministry. Still, their proper work was amongst the heathen; and they regretted the long delay that occurred before their application for a minister from home was responded to. The congregation, almost despairing of the desired help, invited Mr Nesbit to be their permanent minister. He declined, feeling that he must remain in his own peculiar sphere. He greatly rejoiced, when at length in April 1845, the arrival of the Rev. A. G. Fraser, as minister of the Free Church congregation, enabled himself and his colleague to devote their entire energies to direct missionary labour.

For a considerable time after this, Mr Nesbit's engagements continued much the same as they have been described.

Among the young men training under the mission were two Abyssinian youths—Gabru and Maricha Warke. They had been upwards of four years in India previously, and had left it with Dr Wilson, whose charge they had been. They returned from Abyssinia towards the end of 1845, and, living in the mission-house, enjoyed the advantage of Mr Nesbit's special care. The advantage was not small. In itself, the mode in which he conducted family worship was not only in the highest degree impressive, but also in the highest degree instructive. His expositions of the word of

God were admirably clear; nor can his earnest affectionate exhortations to his children in the faith, or the fervour of his prayers, be forgotten by those who have been present on such occasions.

We quote the following as specimens of many letters written to young natives, inquiring with more or less earnestness into the claims of Christianity:—

"*Bombay*, 1846.—My Dear G——,—I rejoice to hear that you are examining the evidences of the truth of Christianity, and feeling their force. But this is not enough. Most Englishmen believe that Christianity is true, but do not believe the truths of Christianity. You may believe that a letter comes from your excellent and trust-worthy father, but may not believe what is in it. You may fear that it contains reproofs, rebukes, and restrictions, which you do not like; and, therefore, you may never open it, or opening it, only read it carelessly. And thus, while you believe it to be a genuine letter from a trust-worthy person, you may, after all, not believe its contents. You do not know or understand what they are. How, then, can you believe them? It is so with the Great Letter from the Father in heaven. A man may believe that it comes from Him, and yet may not believe its contents. It contains, he fears, much against his character, and contrary to his inclinations; and, therefore, he either opens it not, or reads it not with attention, or interprets it not with candour—in a word, understands it not, and therefore believes it not.

"What, then, is the advice you seek? It is this. Study the statements of the Bible, and, while you do so, ask God for a mind and heart to understand and receive them. You have now, perhaps, studied enough the question, Is the Bible true? Turn now to the other question, What does the Bible say? What does it say of me? What does it

say of God? What does it say of His law and government? What does it say of my relation to that law and government? What does it say of sin? What does it say of the method of pardoning sin? What does it say of my depravity? what does it say of the method of subduing it? What does it say of true happiness? what does it say of the mode of obtaining it?

"You are, I fear, 'labouring with' only 'all your own might.' That will not suffice. Sin is an infinite evil, and requires an infinite remedy. You could no more restore yourself to the favour and moral image of God, than you could make a world. The infinite righteousness of the Son of God, and the infinite power of the Spirit of God working within you, can alone effect these great objects. Let this then be your prayer:—

"'O Lord, give me Thy Son's righteousness to take away my sin, and Thy Spirit's influence to purify my soul.'

'The Spirit of God will explain to you, and impress on your heart, the great facts of Christianity; and when once you believe that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life,' your guilt will pass away, your depravity will be subdued, your restless mind will be established with peace, your discontented spirit will be filled with happiness, and your whole being purified, elevated, and blessed.

"Let not these times of thought and solemn sentiment pass unimproved away. It is the voice of God that is thus calling you; Awake, arise, and come away; be reconciled to me in love; serve me with devotedness and delight; and be for ever mine.—I am, my dear G——, yours in Christian good-will, and best desires for your happiness."

He writes to a young man who had lost his situation:—

"My Dear K——,—Did I think you knew the nature of the 'situation' of which I wrote in my postscript of yesterday, I should greatly rejoice in the readiness and ardour which you manifest in inquiring, and seeking it. The situation is, indeed, the best in the world, the best in the universe,—the most cheaply got, the most richly and happily enjoyed, the longest retained. It is indeed a situation for eternity as well as time,—for the soul as well as for the body; the perfection, and consummate bliss, of our never-ending being. I would again urge you to apply for it. You cannot apply too soon; you may, too late. And, as I said before, the application must be made through a third party, as you have offended the great Patron. The medium of application is one altogether appropriate; in His divine nature He is equal to the Governor of all; in His human nature He is one of us. He undertook our cause; He assumed our nature; He bore our sins; He brought in everlasting righteousness for us; He is at the right hand of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for all that seek His mediation.

"But I fear that you mistook the nature of the situation to which I directed your attention; that you thought it was one much inferior, of much less value, and of much shorter duration. But, surely, if you are eager to apply for the less, you will be still more eager to apply for the greater. If you seek a place under an earthly Governor, you will much more seek one under the Governor of earth and heaven. If you are willing to receive the one as an 'offender' against a man, and therefore, through the intercession of another, you will be still more willing to receive the other as an 'offender' against God, and through the intercession of 'the Son of God' and 'Son of Man.' Your readiness to believe all I said, when you thought it referred

to some of the sweet advantages of time, shews how readily you would believe all I should say on the blessings of eternal salvation, were they equally sweet to your taste. Draw not back, therefore, but rather come forward with greater earnestness, and, through the mediation of the 'Son of the Highest,' secure rank, and power, and honour, and bliss for time and for eternity."

The following account of an interview with a native youth is of the same kind. It will also serve as an illustration of singular applications which are constantly made to missionaries:—

"A young man of respectable appearance, of the goldsmith caste, addressing the Missionary, said, 'I wish to speak with you, sir.'

"*Missionary.*—Speak on.

"*Young Man.*—I wish to speak with you in private.

"*Miss.*—(Taking him aside.) Let me know the object of your visit.

"*Y. M.*—I wish to be baptised. (A short pause, during which I contemplated the applicant and his words). But remember, on one condition,—that you pay all my debts.

"*Miss.*—What are your debts?

"*Y. M.*—About Rs. 1200 or 1500.

"*Miss.*—They are more than that.

"*Y. M.*—No, no more; Rs. 1500 at the utmost.

"*Miss.*—Now, I know for a certainty, your debt is much greater; and I know, too, to whom you are indebted.

"*Y. M.*—Who has told you of my affairs?

"*Miss.*—One has told me; and to Him you are indebted more than all the world can pay.

"*Y. M.*—You mean the Supreme Being.

"*Miss.*—Yes. What is your debt to him?

"*Y. M.*—That is true. But I speak of the other.

"*Miss.*—But I speak of the great debt, and you should think of it. Get that paid off first of all; and then apply yourself to the other. Do you know what friend to go to, to get the great debt paid off?

"*Y. M.*—No.

"*Miss.*—What! Have you never heard of Him into whose name you sought to be baptised? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, pays sinners' debts, and sets them free.

"*Y. M.*—I had never heard of that.

"*Miss.*—What! you had never heard of Christ, and yet wanted to 'come into His religion'! Were you going to make a leap in the dark?

"*Y. M.*—Men must sometimes do so, if there is a greater evil or terror behind; what can they do?

"*Miss.*—The greatest evil of all is the great debt I spoke of. Get that cancelled by the Saviour of men; and then he will enable you to pay the little debt also. He will not rain rupees from heaven upon you, but will give you the spirit of self-denial and of diligence, and thus enable you to meet the demands of your creditors. Take this tract with you, study it, and become a free and happy man."

In a general review of 1846, Mr Nesbit writes:

"Never since the mission commenced, we believe, has there been so much inquiry and emotion on the subject of religion, in connection with our vernacular schools and English Institution, and our Scripture readings, lectures, and services unconnected with either, as during the present year. In several instances the mind is convinced, the heart melted, and the purpose formed; but no sooner is this discovered or suspected, than an accumulation of trials is brought to bear upon the rising resolution which, for the present, appears lamentably successful. Many seem about to enter on 'the way which leadeth unto life,' but they are

stopped or slain at the gate. . . . . The Report now made abounds with operations and impressions; the latter, indeed, are more widely spread than ever, and our hopeful inquirers more numerous than we have yet known them; still it only touches on effects. This unfruitfulness we would lament, and, with mingled sorrow and hope, seek the blessing of Him who, while we 'plant and water,' can alone 'give the increase.' Yet it is a comfort to know that much seed has been sown, and that the sowers of the seed are multiplying amongst us. The native of India of European descent, the Parsi, the Muhammadan, and the Brahman, are all entering as labourers into the field, and that, too, with a genuine love to the Master whom they serve. This we may receive as a 'token for good,'—as almost a pledge of the coming harvest. These are times of trial from the Lord's hand; and these are also 'times of refreshing from the Lord's presence.' We would bear ourselves with penitence, humility, and prayer, under the former; and we would with simply longing souls, wait for the latter. *He* sends a plentiful rain, and refreshes His heritage 'when it is weary.' *He* 'gives the word;' and 'great is the company of those that publish it;' —great also is the conquest made, and large the spoil divided. 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth,—Thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.'"

To an interesting part of the mission-work, the schools for the Israelites, we find him thus adverting in a letter to Dr Gordon in 1846:

"*Rewadandá, near Bombay.*—The interests of the Israelitish schools have brought me hither. The schools I have overtaken have given me general satisfaction. It is exceedingly pleasing to see the natural children of Abraham early

instructed in their father's faith. Long did the Gentile seem to hate his brother, and to ask, 'Am I his keeper?' Now, love to him, and deep anxiety for his welfare, and diligent exertion in his behalf, have supplanted that cruel disposition. The yearnings of the great apostle of the Gentiles have come over the Gentiles themselves. Their 'hearts' desire, and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved.' They long for the banished one's return, and give him a much better welcome back to the royal house than they met with themselves. They do not receive him with the cold acquiescence—'Then hath God also to the Jews granted again repentance unto life;' but his restoration is to them 'as life from the dead,' and with mingled tenderness and joy they say, 'This, my brother, was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.'

"These dispositions, and the prayers and labours flowing out of them, have, in many instances, been followed by the utmost good that was sought. 'The blessing of Abraham has come upon' his children. Here, as yet, we remain uncheered by any such tokens of the Divine love. Still much has been effected to call for gratitude, and encourage hope. The whole body of the Israelites in these districts have become a very different people from what they were. The form of their religion, and the standard of their morality, are quite altered. They were 'mingled among the heathen, and had learned their ways;' and in them was fulfilled the prophetical denunciation of the servant of the Lord; 'Jehovah shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth to the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.' The Israelites 'scattered' among the Hindus, had become worshippers of the Hindu gods and goddesses, and afforded a striking instance of the fulfilment

of the curse. Now they have cast these gods and goddesses away; and the cause they assign is the fear of the word of the great and mighty God. Falsehood, and other vices too, are much repressed. This is far from salvation, but it may be employed as a step towards it. And as they have borne the curse, may we not now anticipate the blessing, and see, in the mitigations of the one, the first movements of the other? 'And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God; I am Jehovah.'"

On the same subject, after another visit, he says:

"I am happy to say that I found, with one exception, all the schools decidedly improved. I had much pleasure in helping the teachers and the taught to compare Scripture with Scripture, and the Old Testament with the New; and the beauty, preciousness, and harmony of the whole, I often thought, would convince and carry away their minds all unconscious of their silent mighty power. But the Lord alone must do it, and be exalted in the deed. The devastations of Israel must remain 'until the Spirit be poured out from on high.' 'Oh that He would rend the heavens and come down.' The marvel of the inefficacy of Almighty truth, apparently brought in contact with the mind, is especially conspicuous in the Israelitish superintendent of the whole of this division of our schools Of excellent judgment, of accurate and extensive Scripture knowledge, of good general information, of candid disposition, he seems to see that the New Testament is only a development of the Old; yet he feels no con-

straint to confess Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth."

The people above alluded to, the Beni-Israel or *Children of Israel*, as they call themselves, are a very interesting community, in number about eight thousand or rather more, living in Bombay and the neighbourhood. What precisely they are, and whence they came, it is not very easy to settle; that they are mainly Abrahamic is evident even from their features; and Arabia, where from ancient times large numbers of Jews have resided, may probably have been the country from which they reached India. They are distinct from the Jews of Cochin. The American, the English, and the Free Church Missions, have all laboured amongst them—the greatest share of the work, for a good many years past, falling to the last-mentioned agency. Brief allusions to the work among them have already occurred in our quotations from Mr Nesbit's papers.

About this time, even amidst all those "distractions" of the western metropolis, of which Mr Nesbit had so feelingly complained, we find him writing not a few letters that must have proved both refreshing and strengthening to those who received them. Few had a more tender and sympathetic heart, and few could more ably and fully exhibit the comfort that is stored up in Christ for all that "mourn in Zion." How different are such "strong consolations" from all those

Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena—

the boasted "consolations of philosophy!"

We put together several letters to friends in affliction, —written, most of them, about this period.

"Let your faith, my very dear friend, cast anchor within the vail; and you will meet secure, and overcome victorious, all the waves of affliction and adversity, agitation and

sorrow. Is not the Forerunner for you gone there? And does He not invite you there to set your affections, and there to rest and fix your soul? Even now, the believer is privileged to 'sit with Christ in heavenly places.' Take your place, my beloved friend, where He who 'loved you and gave himself for you,' wishes you to be. It is a part of His supreme felicity to have those whom the Father hath given Him, actually with him where He is; and next to that, if not equalling it, is His delight in having them with Him in spirit. I have often found consolation with any sorrow in a train of thought like the following:—'This is a great trial; it excites great grief. But it is meant to call forth great faith. He says, Trust me largely; make large demands on my power and grace; come nearer me than ever; drink more freely than ever of the living waters; know more of me than ever; receive more of my fulness than ever. Well, this trial is in one respect a great privilege. It is meant to make a wider opening for the living God into my soul. It is meant to expand all my faculties, and elevate my whole nature, and raise me nearer to Him of whom it is said, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'"

"Love and sympathetic sorrow drew me to you day by day before, and now love and sympathetic joy and delight in the expression of your affection, draw us and bind us to you still. . . . . How happy the interchanges of love! How blessed to give! How blessed to receive! 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in Him.' How sad that this element of excellence and of bliss, should be so rare even in the Church of God, and among God's dear children! How much there is to choke up its springs and obstruct its course! Happy they who 'keep themselves in the

love of God,' and in the 'pure-hearted and fervent love' of each other. But better things are in reserve for the church and for the world. When 'the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea,' then shall the love of God and the kindred and inseparable love of His people equally replenish it. Earth will then be 'the land of love,' the scene of strong yet holy and harmonious passion, the sphere of affections and desires ardent as the sun, yet pure as his light—the abode of extatic joy, yet sweet reposing peace. . . .

"If such are your feelings to a minister of Christ, what ought to be your feelings to Christ Himself, the tender and compassionate High Priest—the gentle Physician who put forth his hand to heal—the wise and gracious Saviour who desires to perfect you by sufferings? Let these be fully realised and warmly cherished, and let never-failing tokens of your gratitude and affection go forth for Him, and ascend heavenward to Him. 'He taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in them that hope in His mercy.' He delighted in you when you 'hoped against hope,' and 'trusted' when He 'slew' you; now let Him delight in your extolling Him for his mercy, and crying out with deep and passionate emotion, 'O Jehovah my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever.' We unite in prayer that all the holy and gracious purposes of the Lord in your afflictions may be accomplished, that His hand may be still upon you for good, and that as He has so marvellously provided for the past, so He may call forth your admiring praises by His gracious provisions for the future."

"I need not say how deeply I sympathise with my beloved wife in all her expressions of benevolence and anxiety for the best welfare of your family. Your precious parent who is gone, stands before you as a bright example to copy.

Walk in her footsteps, and follow her to her blessed home. Thither every step on earth should tend, and all our relations, and all our engagements, should be formed and held, entered into and executed, in reference to it. What is a wife, a husband, a brother, a friend? A help, a guide, a solace, on the pilgrim path to the better land. At the end of the pilgrimage, our lives will not end. Modified to meet the times and circumstances of heaven, they will live and flourish, and refresh our hearts for ever. And there is a love that will rule and irradiate all—the love of Him who 'loved us, and gave Himself for us.' Its surpassing brightness will not eclipse our other affections. It will both animate them with its own warmth, and fill them with its own light and glory. Christ loved us, and loves, and will love us, if we are His; and if He cannot cease to love us, we cannot cease to love one another. Eternity will thus be the very consummation and perfection of all that is begun on earth in obedience to the will, and in subserviency to the glory, of God. Eternity is no blank: death is no issue into a dark abyss. Eternity, to faith and love, is full of blessed realities, rich possessions, satisfying joys. Eternity is full of '*Him who inhabiteth eternity*,' and He is the portion of every soul that seeks Him. Would that we who naturally think so ill of God and His doings, and His gifts, and of His house, and the many mansions there (John xiv. 2); would that we could think well of Him and of all that is His! Would that we could think infinitely well of Him, and that for ever! Would that we could give ourselves, as He asks for us in His Son, unreservedly and altogether into His hands, to His will, to the grace He would now impart, to the glory He would raise us to at last!"

"*Bombay, April* 1847.—We necessarily come late in the

train of comforters. Yet we would not, on that account, draw back. Neither would we, because late comforters are often revivers of grief. Yours is not a grief that you desire to repress or to conceal. It is a holy sanctifying grief which you would not lose, a grief illumined with hope, and not unmingled with joy. It is a grief which, with many other combining and co-operating circumstances, is detaching you from earth, and raising and attracting you to heaven. Death to him whom you mourn has been the beginning of a sinless blissful life, and to you it is a preparation for the same. Death thus replenishes heaven with inhabitants, and fits the dwellers on earth for that replenishment.

" ' Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' How ' precious the death' of that ' Holy One,' who died that we might live, and, dying, paid the full ransom of innumerable souls, and provided ample means of their being like Him, and living with Him ! Partaking, though not judicially, of the preciousness of the death of this Holy One, how precious is the death of His holy members ! It softens, and sanctifies, and encourages the people of God. It makes the men of the world sigh with troubled longings, or form the serious and deliberate prayer, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' It calls angels from heaven to convey the soul to Abraham's bosom with greater joy than they experienced in heaven, when it was announced, A sinner hath repented ! It glorifies the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the communion of the Spirit.

"We often speak of death being ' gain' to the dying Christian. And so it is. ' To him to live is Christ, to die is gain.' But we are apt to forget that it brings gain not only to him who joins the heavenly throng, but to that throng itself. For what saith the great Leader and Life of the

whole? 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.' As this will is fulfilled, so is His joy fulfilled, until He shall present the entire church to himself with exceeding great joy. And if such are the will and joy of the Head, similar are those of the members already 'made perfect' in holiness. And in these the angels sympathise. To their holy and benevolent spirits every accession from earth is an accession of joy, an enhancement of the bliss and glory of their native heaven. Let us therefore still console our minds with the thought, that what is a loss, a bitter and devastating loss to us, is a gain, not to one, but to countless myriads. Your beloved husband had many friends upon earth; for he was eminently friendly,—he was 'a succourer of many, and of ourselves also.' But he has far more friends in heaven, far more to rejoice with him above, than there are to mourn for him below. We desire greatly to see the face of those we greatly love, and hence the anguish of losing the light of those countenances which have long shone upon us. But the same law of vision which affects us affects those above; it gives us greater suffering, but brings them greater joy. And us, too, it will affect for ever, not as now, to pierce with a sense of loss and desolation, but to fill with gladness and delight. We shall see Christ. We shall see his people whom we most fondly and tenderly loved, and shall only love them more; we shall see all the multitude which no one can number, with all its varieties, and excellencies, and transporting beauties. Even within the circle of those we know, what wide communion is opened up with parents, partners in life, brothers and sisters, and friends, as yet sorrowfully remembered. But who shall tell the great communion with the whole assembly, guided by Him with whom our

fellowship is, and ever will be?—for 'truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

He writes, in April 1846, to his colleague Mr M. Mitchell, then at Malta, where his wife had graciously been restored from an illness that had almost proved fatal:—

"We deeply sympathized with you in your sore distress, and rejoice with you in your returning hopes and joys. You have, indeed, proved how pitiful and of what tender mercy our heavenly Father is. Next to his saving our souls is His sparing our affections; and how sweet the thought that it is through the compassionate Jesus that He does both. 'He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses; and because He did so, He heals us, and comforts and builds up.' His gentleness makes us great. May your gratitude imbue your soul, and your prayers and vows return upon you! You drew near unto God; draw not back now, nor stand afar off. He was with you in trouble; be with Him in health and joy,—in active service, and in buoyant praise. You have both as one endured the same affliction; and you will both with one heart and one mind glorify Him who hath brought you through the deep waters,—in whom you trusted and hoped, if not rejoiced, as you passed through 'the flood. . . .'"

He writes to the Rev. Dr Stevenson:—

"Gracious is Jehovah and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. . . . 'I was brought low, and He helped me,' was the language of the Psalmist. You and we may take up the same; for surely we have amply experienced the truth, and mercy, and grace which he extols. How often has he heard our voice and our supplication, and delivered our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. If 'the vows of God are' not 'upon us,' His benefits and blessings, His love and kindness, and all the obli-

gations these involve, certainly are; and we may well make the further language of the Psalmist our own, 'I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon Jehovah's name.' 'I will walk before Jehovah in the land of the living.' If we look to Scripture, we shall find very few instances indeed in which any, even temporal mercy, is refused to the fervent in-wrought prayer of the righteous. In these sceptical days we can scarcely venture to believe God will hear us with respect to anything besides spiritual blessings; and when we do pray, and He does hear us, we are apt to think that the event has no connection with our prayers. This does great dishonour to God, and entails great weakness, and much evil on our own souls. Our unbelief cuts short our prayers; and the absence of prayer, and of its blessed fruits, again confirms our unbelief.

"But the days seem not far distant when our wants will be too strong for our unbelief, and very pressure will constrain us to cry out, and distress to desire, and to hope, and to ask. Driven into a corner like Jacob, and finding no escape, we shall be fain to wrestle all night rather than meet the terrors of the morning. I have often stood amazed to feel and to see what a measure of force it requires to squeeze a prayer out of a human heart; and I do not at all wonder that the strongest persecutions should be brought to bear upon the Church. It is then she is taught to pray; and she retains the lesson for years afterwards, so that her 'rest' is 'edifying;' and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,' her children are multiplied."

He writes, about this time, to an old and esteemed friend, the late Mr Buchan of Kelloe:—

"*Jan.* 1. 1847.—My Dear Mr Buchan,—I have now addressed you at the beginning of several years, and 1847 is

added to their number. We are yet 'the living to praise' the Lord where He is so much dishonoured, and to advance His kingdom where rebellion against Him so much prevails. We are the living not only to hallow His name, but to make it known that it may be hallowed; not only to do His will, but to commend its justice, holiness, and goodness, that others may do it also; and our position is only becoming more and more interesting. As year after year is filling up the sum of time, so is year after year opening up the great ends and issues for which time was made.

"The plans of God are developing, and the results of His providence and grace realizing. Prophecy is unveiling under the discoveries of Time. Interpretations are being set aside or confirmed. A few years more and we shall know what is meant by 'the fulness of the Gentiles,' and the restoration of the Jews; what by 'Jehovah being King over all the earth,' and 'all knowing Him from the least to the greatest.' And we take a share in, and are a part of, this mighty and marvellous, wise, holy, and benevolent system. We are every year rising to higher elevations to survey the landscape over which we travel, and coming nearer to its awful, yet blessed, confines bordering on eternity. How firm should be our faith, how bright our hope, how ardent our zeal, how importunate our prayers, how energetic our activity!

"Both 1847 and 1868 have been marked out as great prophetic periods. Facts will speedily mark them with characters not to be mistaken. And, whether anything extraordinary may distinguish them or not, the progress of the Lord's great work will distinguish their progressive months and onward course; for, whatever may be our fears and misgivings, the great Head of the Church and Prince of the kings of the earth has none. 'He shall not fail nor

be discouraged until He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law.'

"Our work at Bombay during 1846 has not, to all appearance, produced much fruit. One young man [Bala Gopal], however, has been redeemed from heathenism, and we trust from sin, who by his character, intellect, and decision of mind, promises, if preserved, not only 'to adorn the doctrine' of Christ, but greatly to advance its interests among his countrymen. He will, we hope, become a second Narayan among his Brahmanical brethren.

"I am happy to say that your protegé [an Armenian boy] still continues under our tuition. Some time ago Mr Henderson, our 'lay associate' in the mission, commenced a boarding-school for boys, where we thought he could be more easily superintended and taken care of than with us. He has, therefore, been with him since the middle of last year, and enjoys, at home and in the school, all the advantages of general education and religious instruction. We regret that we see as yet no signs of holy impression; but in the field that we cultivate we know not where the cultivation will prosper, and we must 'sow by all waters,'—in the morning scattering the seed, and in the evening withholding not our hand.

"You remember conferring a great benefit on me at the commencement of my missionary course. You supplied my library with a number of excellent books. Now that the native mind has advanced, and intellectual pride and presumption rise up against the gospel, we require books of a different character, such as Lardner on the Evidences of Christianity, and works on the Interpretation of Scripture. Translations of Sanskrit, too, are most valuable, giving us a ready insight into those views which we are called to assault or to undermine."

He writes to the same friend, a year later:—

"I have to return you many thanks for your kindly furnishing the means of education to the Armenian boy, now a lad under the care of our mission.

"I have also to give you my warmest thanks for your kind response to my request for books. You will unite with us in prayer that all these means of usefulness may, under the Divine direction and blessing, become abundantly fruitful.

"We deeply sympathise with you with regard to the severe accidents from which you have suffered so much. But they are not 'accidents;' they are wise and good appointments of our heavenly Father, who 'knoweth our frame,' both of body and mind, and knoweth what things will best 'work together for good.'

"My beloved wife joins me in cordial and affectionate regards. We would fain see you, and converse with you once more 'in the flesh.' But, should this be denied, a purer and happier converse awaits us in the Spirit, and one yet more blessed when our body itself shall be 'spiritual,' 'glorious,' 'incorruptible.' Farewell, then, for the present, beloved and highly valued friend, who hast been 'a succourer of many, and of ourselves also.' 'The good Lord' return a hundredfold into your bosom all the kindness you have shewn to 'His brethren!'"

We find among Mr Nesbit's papers abundant proof that his sympathies were wide as well as deep. Thus, he warmly entered into the joys and sorrows of the Church at home; and it is not without regret that we pass over without quotation his letters on the death of such men as Welsh and Chalmers. With regard to labourers in the mission-field, he had attained more perhaps than many, to a state of feeling which enabled him to give thanks for the success of

others almost as fervently as for his own. We find a letter expressive of sympathy with the Free Church Missionaries at Madras, in peculiar circumstances of mingled joy and sorrow which had befallen them early in 1847, written by Mr Nesbit, and signed by all the members of the Bombay Mission. Another letter, drawn up by him, was sent by the Bombay Missionaries to their brethren at Calcutta, on the death of the excellent John Macdonald.* In like manner, he truly sympathised with his brethren of all denominations, when, in the providence of God, breaches were made in their ranks. His heart evidently grew in tenderness. Frequently, in later years at least, as we have stood by his side to watch the remains of some Christian friend committed to the tomb, we have seen the tears dropping from his eyes.

In the earlier part of 1847, the Mission, and indeed the cause of Christ, sustained a heavy loss in the death of Major St Clair Jameson. He had, for many years, taken the deepest interest in the advancement of the gospel, and especially among the females of India. He had laboured with much diligence and success while at home in 1836–9, to awaken among the ladies of Scotland an interest in the important subject of female education in the East. Mr Nesbit writes to Captain (now Major) Davidson, an intimate friend of the deceased :—

"There was much of an alleviating nature in our dear brother Jameson's death. 'He died in the presence of all his brethren;' he died upheld by consolations, and overflowing with thanksgivings. He died full of believing prayer that God would both save and bless him and his.

"His request was to be buried beside that 'dear saint of God,' Mademoiselle Jallot, who first left Popery for pure

* It will be found embodied in Dr Tweedie's interesting Memoir of Mr Macdonald.

Christianity, and then the joys of Christian society in England for the labours and sorrows of a missionary life among the heathen in India. She has a plain graceful monument over her; and he will soon, no doubt, have a corresponding one over him."

The memory of this good and valuable man is perpetuated in the Free Church Institution by a scholarship which bears his name. The trial to the mission was very great, and seldom have the missionaries sorrowed more than they did over the grave of St Clair Jameson. May many such as he be raised up in India,—men who, instead of extending a languid approval to missionary work, will shew by deeds of holy zeal that they take a personal and vital concern in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom among India's benighted millions!

This would have been a fitting place, even if the name of Jameson had not naturally suggested it, to glance at the progress of female education. We have already mentioned Miss Reid, who arrived from Scotland in February 1839. Her missionary life was brief. She died in October 1840; and, during the greater part of the time she was in India, she was much tried by broken health. About a year afterwards, a French Protestant lady, Madle. Desirée Jallot, arrived in Bombay, as an agent of the same society that had sent out Miss Reid. Her course was still more brief than her predecessor's;—she was taken away before her eager spirit had well entered on the work. It was beside her mortal remains that Major Jameson had requested his own dust might be laid. She had been closely connected with his family, and had thus been led to renounce the errors of Popery. The removal of these two ladies, who had intended to devote their entire time and energy to the good of the daughters of India, was a severe trial to the mission. Other disap-

pointments followed. Still, progress was made. The wives of the missionaries diligently assisted in promoting the great work, as indeed we have seen they had done from the commencement of the Scottish Mission.

In the end of 1844 an interesting case of conversion occurred in connection with the Female Schools, which happily, ere long, was followed by similar cases. A pupil, named Maina, nearly fourteen years of age, had declared her intention of embracing Christianity. She was instantly subjected to much persecution, and even personal violence, and took refuge in Mr Mitchell's family. The people of her caste were so violent on one occasion, that they could hardly be quelled by the police. All this told very powerfully on the attendance at the schools. We read in the Report of the Mission for 1844 :—

" One result of Maina's avowing her desire to join the church of Christ has been, that our female schools in the neighbourhood have been completely shattered. The female schools in the missionaries' compounds, which were both numerous and interesting, have been greatly injured, and the presence of Maina in a Mission family will sorely retard their re-establishment. This is very trying; but we have a blessed consolation if one soul be saved, although we should see our cherished schemes for the time shivered into fragments.

" The rudiments of a female boarding-school are now in Mr Mitchell's family. Maina's example is very useful, and her influence over her companions is great."

In 1846, Mrs Seitz, a lady familiar with the language and customs of the natives, and otherwise highly qualified for the work, kindly offered her gratuitous services in female education. These were thankfully accepted. The " Boarding-School and Orphanage,"—a kind of agency, the import-

ance of which had never been lost sight of since Mrs Wilson, about fourteen years before, had established her "School for Poor and Destitute Native Girls,"—was put under her care; and, from its "rudimentary" state, gradually grew in numbers, until it became one of the most interesting and hopeful parts of the mission work.

Soon after Mrs Seitz commenced her labours, Mr Nesbit remarks:—

"Mrs Seitz has five boarders, and nearly forty day-scholars; and it is most pleasing to see the order, and cleanliness, and attention that mark the school. With Maina the superintendence is complete."

We next find Mr Nesbit alluding with much thankfulness to the progress made in another most important branch of the work—the training up of Native preachers. He writes to the Rev. Dr Buchanan, who was then Convener of the Committee on Foreign Missions:—

"16*th Dec.* 1846.—We held our meeting of Presbytery at the beginning of the month. Our principal business regarded dear Hormazdji's licence. His trials were full; and in the most important points most gratifying. . . . . His first sermon in the Free Church more than vindicated the Presbytery's decision. Although well known among the Christians of Bombay, he took both them and others by surprise. . . . . All were delighted and moved; some wept. Dear Narayan sat sometimes smiling, sometimes weeping; and after the sermon was closed, the young preacher could not help weeping himself." . . . .

CHAPTER XI.

ILLNESS OF MRS NESBIT—VOYAGE FROM INDIA—DEATH OF MRS NESBIT—ARRIVAL IN BRITAIN—ENGAGEMENTS.

For the last year or two Mrs Nesbit's health had slowly, but visibly, declined. Towards the end of 1847 she suffered so seriously that Mr Nesbit took her to Rutnagherry, where, for a time, she seemed to revive.

He thus speaks of his engagements while there, and expresses an opinion, to which reference has already been made, on the importance of the study of English:—

"Chalmers says, 'The missionary's business is with man;' and here he is in every painful and interesting aspect, appealing powerfully (at least to those to whom have been given 'eyes to see, and ears to hear') for pity ,and help, and prayer. The proud Brahmans of this quarter still violently object; but I have had many audiences, composed chiefly of other classes, that have listened and inquired, not only without 'contradiction and blasphemy,' but with intelligence and seeming pleasure. Here also, as well as in Bombay, I have had an English Bible class for natives daily; and it is certainly a fact that presses itself on the attention, that the natives receive Christian instruction, through the medium of English, with a freedom from prejudice, and a general openness and readiness of mind, unknown in connection with

their own language. The new vehicle of thought seems to thrust their old thoughts aside, and to clear the way for the conveyance of what is at once new and true."

He writes to Dr Wilson, whose arrival from Europe was then daily expected:

"*Nov.* 9. 1847.—MY DEAR JOHN,—We are glad to see your voyages and travels so near an end, and to learn that mercy has followed you hitherto. Probably, while I write, the same mercy has brought you to these shores, and discovered to you the scenes of former labour, hope, and prayer, and to your beloved wife, the untried region which the Divine promise and providence have made the land of her choice. Memories and reflections crowd upon you and upon us which, like 'the house of mourning,' it is well to converse with; for they call to 'godly sorrows' and 'fervent prayers,' which 'make the heart better.' They tell of change and instability; and bid us cling to God's unchanging love and faithfulness. They tell of our native emptiness; and urge the cry that He would fill us with His fulness. They tell of loss and separation; and make us long for more of His presence here, and for the gathering together of those that are His, in that home where death cannot spoil, nor sin disturb, nor separation sadden.

"We regret that we cannot receive you and your beloved wife. My beloved one still continues to improve. What shall we, what shall I, render to the Lord for all his benefits towards us?"

These cheering hopes, however, were sorrowfully disappointed. Two months afterwards he writes to Mr Hislop of Nagpore:

"*Feb.* 1848.— . . . . My beloved wife has been alarmingly ill. On the morning of the 13th she stood prepared in faith and hope to be called hence. But our earnest cry,

seconded by the prayers of many on our behalf, has, we trust, been heard. . . . . We have found it 'good for us to have been afflicted,' and the 'house of mourning better than the house of feasting.' The preciousness and glory of Christ have been marvellously opened up, and the heart filled with admiration and adoration of His majesty and grace. O that 'the good Lord' would spare and strengthen her to tell of what she has seen, and tasted, and felt."

Mr Nesbit was so engrossed with the painful thought of his beloved wife's failing health, that he forgets to refer, in any paper we can recover, to his own. It, too, was greatly broken; and for a considerable time, in the early part of 1848, he was unable to leave the house. Sorrows were accumulating. In reference to his wife's restoration, an occasional gleam of hope was succeeded by a deeper gloom. She must, at least, leave India. He writes to Mr Hislop:—

"*March* 1848.—When I last wrote to you we did not anticipate our present position. Drs Leith and Arbuckle agree in opinion, that a long sea voyage is the only likely means of prolonging her life. The announcement was one of alarm, sorrow, and disappointment. But we committed ourselves to Him whose our breath is, and whose are all our ways. We 'asked mercies of the God of heaven,' and have not been denied them. It has pleased the 'Father of mercies' to remove the worst of the symptoms. . . . . I told you some of our feelings in my last; and I trust we can now say that our eyes are more than ever toward the Lord. Our pilgrim feeling is greatly increased. Such hyperbolical expressions as those in which the world is called 'a vale of tears,' appear almost true. Weeping, and seeing much cause of weeping around us, we wonder to see others laugh, and especially the sons of oppression, poverty, and superstitious fears. . . . . I know there is a wrong way of

feeling the emptiness of the world. The world is never empty of God, or God's kingdom, or God's glory, or God's people; and it is worldly sorrow that would make us indifferent to the world. Towards this error I feared we tended. 'The joy of the Lord' has not sufficiently been 'our strength.' We have 'fainted' when we were 'rebuked of Him.' All has appeared waste and desolate, although the Lord was there, and His temple stood magnificent, bright, imperishable, among the ruins. . . . . Our united path is sufficiently plain. To leave our work, its living fruit, its promising blossoms, its germinating seed, is, in itself, painful; and to do so unexpectedly and unprepared, is still more so. But 'Jehovah-jireh,' and that is our confidence and peace. You will remember us where remembrance is of most avail, for we greatly need the help of your prayers."

At the same time he writes to a friend of Mrs Nesbit's:

"*March* 1848.—I wrote you of sickness and convalescence from Rutnagherry; and I am now called upon to write to you on the same theme, under more anxious circumstances. . . . . To the peculiarities of our departure are added the regrets of leaving our chosen work and fellow-workmen, with the living reward and rising hope of their labours. This were painful in any circumstances; and it is particularly so when we are called unexpectedly away. It is well that all the Bombay European missionaries of our church are now returned; and that they are strengthened by the accession of a rising native ministry.

"During my beloved wife's continued illness we have had especially solemn seasons, when we were brought very near to God, and pleaded with Him, as it were, face to face. My dearest H. expected to depart; and I waited in mingled anguish and hope, to see the evolutions of a Father's wisdom and love. Happily we did not meet God in His naked

holiness and justice; but we could say with hope, 'Enter not into judgment with Thy servants, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.' We met God in Christ; and not only took courage, but found peace. The precious sufferer herself laid firm hold of the skirt of His garment, who hath His name written, 'Jehovah OUR righteousness;' and trusting in Him, joy flowed into the heart as from a well of living waters. She gazed with admiration on His greatness and His love; and adored Him not only as her Saviour, but as a God and Saviour of such marvellous excellence as to transcend all blessing, and glory, and praise. O that we had such revelations of truth oftener made to us, and saw things here as we shall see and enjoy them in heaven, where the 'vision beatific' is the chiefest joy. 'One thing should we desire of the Lord, that should we seek after, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.' I am writing all about ourselves, but you will excuse the egotism on this occasion.

"We would now thank you for your long and valued letter, which the beloved invalid is sorry she cannot at all reply to at present. England, we trust, may restore to her her departed vigour, which may second the never-dying energies of the mind, and enable her to carry out its designs. Your little ones, we trust, are, with yourselves, quite well, developing their little faculties and affections to the joy of your heart. Oh! may you and they have such grace given, that these may be found touched from heaven and moved by a hand divine. You have committed to you undying beings to rear for immortality."

He writes to one of his brothers:—

"MY DEAREST ——,—I cannot by a few words of joyful intelligence relieve your minds regarding my beloved H.;

nor must I leave you in suspense. We are still kept in the midst of our trials, hoping and sorrowing, and sorrowing and hoping. Some have said in such circumstances, 'What should we wait for the Lord any longer?" (2 Kings vi. 33); but our hearts would reply to all the providences that would tempt them to despond, 'Lord, to whom shall we go?" We have not, like the idolatrous Israelites, two gods, or more, so that, when one fails us, we can have recourse to another. We have One, and One only. He is all our help and all our hope. By Him we live; without Him we cannot die: even life and health, without Him, were death. What, then, were sickness and decay? Oh for more of that wondrous life of which the Psalmist sings, 'Thy mouth is satisfied with good; thy youth is renewed like the eagle's;' 'In old age they shall still bring forth fruit; they shall be fat and flourishing;' and of which the Apostle writes, 'Though our outward man perisheth, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' Dearest ——, you have been a strong, healthy, prosperous man; but this vigorous, happy life is not enough; you must have another. The former will decay, break down, fall, perish; the latter only can stand in the midst of the invasions of the many evils that 'flesh is heir to,' and not only will it stand, but flourish and fruiten for ever. Without the two lives I have spoken of, it is miserable to live; without them it is supremely wretched to die. The life the dying man has is taken away, and there is nothing in reserve. He looks forward through ages and ages, and yet ages more, to a state without life, without light, without hope, without God. Jesus, who knew what the value and necessity of that life are, exclaimed to the obstinate Jews, in mingled amazement, indignation, and anguish, 'Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.' This was His anguish while

they lived; it was theirs when they died. 'Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life,' sounded in their ears on earth. It now seems to be re-echoed from heaven, and resound through hell, 'Ye would not come unto me that ye might have life.'

"With but one life, what could we do in our present circumstances? We watch its tide, and it appears to flow; and our hearts overflow with gratitude and joy. Again it seems to ebb; and our hopes ebb with it, and carry our joys into the deep. Watching, rejoicing, and sorrowing thus we see in the soul a new fountain, whose spring gains strength when other waters are cut off, and refreshes the more when all is dry around. This is our consolation,—we cannot die; we cannot taste of death (John viii. 52; xi. 26). We shall live in, and with, and love Jesus for ever; we shall live with, and love each other for ever. Life and love, here commenced, shall never cease; undying, yea ever growing in our hearts, they shall be our everlasting portion. . . . .

"In praying for ourselves we do not forget you. May 'the Father of mercies' shew you all mercy, and 'the God of all grace' cause it to abound to you and yours. May your children, bearing dear and precious names, be beloved of the Lord, and precious in His sight. May the good Shepherd 'gather them with His arm and carry them in His bosom,' and lead them to the living fountains and green pastures He has provided."

To Mrs Seitz.

"*March* 1848.— . . . . We heard the decision of the medical men with much sorrow and regret; and you will sympathise with us and pray for us. 'The will of the Lord be done.' I had flattered myself that since our visit to Rutnagherry my beloved wife was improving, and that we

might still stay here and help onward the work of the Lord with yourself and others. But we must leave for a time these fair prospects, and do the present will of the Lord whatever it may be. Tell the dear girls that 'Mama Nesbit' clings to them with much affection; that she will never forget them; and that she cherishes the consoling and joyful hope that we shall meet where there is no parting and no 'going out.'"

Mr Nesbit's last sermon, before embarking for England, was addressed to an overflowing auditory. It was a discourse of much power and solemnity, on the text, Philip. iii. 20, 'Our *citizenship* is in Heaven.' He concluded thus:—

"My Christian friends, I have often addressed you from this place, and I am glad, in some respects, that on this peculiar occasion you are still here. We can here better recal that day when, about five years ago, we met for the first time as a church to unite in the public and solemn worship of God. It was indeed a solemn day, not unmingled with sadness. But there was a deep current of holy joy beneath, when you emphatically declared yourselves the household of Christ, with none over the house but Christ Himself. . . . . The solemnity and joy of that day my colleague and myself shared with you; and neither upon the beginning, nor the continuance for nearly two years of our ministrations among you, can we ever look back but with happy, and, we trust, holily happy remembrances. I need not say how much delight we had in speaking of the supremacy of Christ,—of the love of Christ,—of the matchless beauties of His character,—of the exquisite adaptation of His gospel to the nature, and state, and prospects of men. We only lament that these and kindred themes moved us no more, and filled us with no greater joy.

"Besides our delight in the work itself, we had our re-

ward in your love, in those added to the church 'of such as shall be saved,' and in the edification of the members, to whatever degree it was enjoyed.

"The lesson of our text, as now imperfectly unfolded, has been a continued *farewell;* and the text has been chosen to set the word in its fairest light.

"'Farewell! citizens of earth, we *may* meet again', were sad words with which to leave you. Although I can add, I trust we shall,—still they were sad. Dark fear broods over them, and brings despair over our hopes. But, farewell, citizens of heaven! we *shall* meet again. Met, we shall never be sundered; together, we shall be for ever blessed in Christ and in each other. Farewell, citizens of heaven!"

There was a sorrowful leave-taking of many friends, both European and native, both in the Mission and beyond it. The students of the Institution subscribed a sum to found an Annual Prize bearing Mr Nesbit's name. They at the same time presented him with an affectionate address, which called forth from him a most kind and Christian response.

Mr Nesbit embarked with his suffering wife on the 6th of May, in a sailing vessel, the "Rajasthan." The journal he kept at this most solemn season is a deeply affecting document, but almost too sacred to be unveiled to the public gaze. There were alternations of a trying kind—hope and fear, even bright hope, then deeper fear than ever; until, in so far as related to hopes of earth, the slowly gathering night closed round him in thickest darkness. Two human hearts, knit as hearts seldom have been knit, each, as it had seemed, necessary not only to the happiness, but to the existence, of the other,—were about to be torn asunder. It is not for those who have been spared such agonies to attempt to describe, or conceive them. But he

could resign her whom he had loved, as many said, with a "romantic" attachment, to that Saviour whose love infinitely surpassed his own; and she could part from him of whom she said on her dying bed, "O that I could tell of all your wonderful, your more than human love." Regarding her own acceptance in the Saviour, she was not allowed to doubt. She smiled at the mention of the name of Christ, and feebly gasped forth the words, "He is all my salvation and desire." Once and yet again, nature—in her how keenly sensitive!—shrunk appalled from the prospect of finding a tomb in the wild, restless waves. But over this terror too, she was able, through grace, to triumph. "The last words," says her husband, "which we heard her utter,—and they were spoken with great effort,—were, 'He doeth *all things* well;' fit and comely words for a saint to die with,—fit and necessary for me to live with, left behind in a world of sin, sorrow, and temptation."—She slept in Jesus on the 18th of May.

We are indebted to a friend who was a fellow passenger with Mr Nesbit, for the following simple but touching statement:—

"Dear Mr Nesbit was wonderfully supported in the hour of trial, and as long as we could do anything for the dear sufferer; but when all was over, then came the reaction, and he was utterly prostrated with grief, and for a time could neither think nor act for himself. He shrank from the thought of the dear remains being committed to the deep, and was very desirous that St Helena should be the last resting-place. But the captain said it was impossible: we were five or six weeks' sail from the island. The funeral took place in the evening. The passengers and crew were assembled on deck, and the captain read the prayers for burial at sea. Poor Mr Nesbit was leaning on Mr Wright's arm,

and was so much overcome and affected, that we thought he would have fallen to the ground. It was truly a most solemnising scene for all of us. He murmured not, but meekly bowed under the afflicting hand of his Heavenly Father. At the same time, his grief was so deep and so absorbing, that it made one's heart bleed to look at him. By way of taking him off his own thoughts, and feeling that it would be a privilege for us, Mr W. proposed that we should meet in his cabin every morning for reading and prayer. We began with only ourselves, Mr Nesbit, and the Ayah [Mrs Nesbit's female attendant], but in a very short time it was known in the ship. First one and then another of the passengers asked leave to join; and by the end of a week or fortnight, there was scarcely room for all who came. They were delightful, and I trust profitable, little meetings; and while again engaged in his Master's work, Mr Nesbit was lifted above self, and all the cares and sorrows of this earthly scene. Every Sunday at eleven o'clock, weather permitting, we had Divine service on deck; and in the evening we met again in the saloon for catechising, reading, and prayer. Besides, on the week-days, he met with the soldiers and sailors at their own end of the ship, whenever there was opportunity. The young midshipmen also he took a special interest in."

On reaching England early in September, he writes to Dr Wilson :—

"*Sept.* 1848.—My Dear John,—You already know my sore bereavement. . . . . With every spiritual alleviation, the 18th of May was a day of overflowing sorrows; and often has the tide of sorrow ebbed and flowed since then. Meeting and communicating with friends and relatives, causes it to 'swell up to the brim.' You have gone through these waters and know their depth. How they call for all

the sympathies of the 'merciful High Priest,' and the strong hand of the risen and exalted Redeemer! How they necessitate the hope of glory! I never felt as now the need of that consummation of grace. Grace will comfort us in our losses; but glory alone can repair them. Grace will enable us to bear the void; but glory alone can fill it. Loved and lost ones will then be found again, and will more and better than ever fill their ancient place.

"At Berwick I shall find the renewal of bereavements of a more ancient date. But oh! how different in nature, as well as in time, are they! The decayed tree falls under shade of the fresh and fruitful boughs to which it has given birth; in the other case, the green tree itself is cut in twain."

He writes to Mrs Murray Mitchell, then in Scotland:—

"*Sept.* 1848.—My Dear Friend,—You have already heard the heavy tidings of my loss. This is the morning of the day on which 'the desire of mine eyes was taken away from me.' Sixteen weeks I have been alone. The form and voice are gone, and can be realised now only in the heavens. There, blessed be 'the Father of Mercies,' I may still hold communion with them, and comfort myself thereby. This is all that grace will give: glory must give the rest. And the day is not distant when she will be given to me again better than ever. Exalted, perfected, and blessed for evermore, she will give and share a joy which no one will ever take from us. Of this she had a happy foretaste while here; but now it is far better with her than then. Although I know this, I cannot say that I have not desired her back—I have; but it may not be. . . . .

"In my own sorrows I do not forget yours. Your expectations of meeting your beloved cousin are disappointed. Your meeting and communion must be elsewhere. Already the fellow-pilgrims on your youthful path are dropping off,

and you begin to walk much alone. How solitary it is to others more advanced on the journey!"

Soon after, he writes to the same friend:—

"I have to return you many and most grateful thanks for your truly affectionate and most sympathising letter... Under a sense of my own loss, it is a great comfort to think of their 'gain' whom we have lost. In our own case it is a special comfort, for those whom we lament stood in special need of heaven, of its safe retreats, its sheltered calm, its ardent and unchanging love, its unembittered joys. There the inhabitant shall never say, 'I am sick.' They know no longer sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. Their tender affections are never wounded, their tender fears never rise. They love, and are loved. They gaze upon the glory of Him who is love, and are filled with His glory. And soon we shall be with them. Grace will help us through; glory will meet and fill us in the end. . . . . Under my own loss I can sympathise in the joy of others' possessions; and I am rejoiced to hear of your own and your dear husband's prospects. May 'the Father of mercies' grant you a meeting in peace, and a happy dwelling-place in safety and prosperity in the land of our sojourning!

"I have also to return my warmest thanks to your beloved father for his precious letter. . . . . Such reflections as he suggests raise a passing doubt whether those who were as our own soul on earth, remember us in heaven. They are surrounded by objects so resplendent with glory, and with the beauties of holiness, that they can hardly turn from them to objects dim and darkened with sin below. But heaven is compassionate, as well as holy; and if the Lord of heaven remembers us, the inhabitants of heaven will not forget us. . . . . ."

He writes to a friend of Mrs Nesbit's:—

". . . . Glory will repair all our losses. Loved and lost ones shall be found again, and found far better than when lost. All pure and perfect, and for ever happy, sheltered from all evil, and secure from every mournful change—glowing with affections celestial, divine—they will love and be loved with a rapture and a blessedness, of which the relationships of earth gave forth but the first feeble ray. Those who have 'dwelt with each other as heirs together of the grace of life,' and have felt that co-heirship their closest tie, and chiefest joy, will not find the tie dissevered, nor the joy departed, when they both inhabit another land, and mingle in another scene. They will still be co-heirs and joint-possessors of 'life'—of a gracious and a glorious life; and that bliss will be all-sufficient, annihilating every regret, and filling up every void. And all this will be from and in Him who hath made them heirs, and every joy will derive its sweetness from that Divine origin, and from that Divine communion. Every possession will make that Divine portion the more precious, and every love carry away the soul in more ardent and intense affection to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them.

"I can never forget your love to my beloved H., nor cease to be grateful for the kindnesses with which you loaded her. It is to me a great comfort to think that I was privileged to help onwards to her home, one of God's most exalted, but humblest children. And you may now, in the midst of your regrets, share this satisfaction with me. We ministered till our ministrations were no more needed. The better ministry of angels took the place of ours; and the endearing companionship of Abraham and all the faithful more than supplied the want of our presence. Has she, then, amidst better loves and brighter characters, forgotten us who still bear the stain of sin? Her Lord forgets us

not, and neither can she. She waits for a little time till all her brethren and sisters are 'accomplished,' till the whole are gathered, 'no wanderer lost,' the family all in heaven."

He writes to Mrs Seitz :—

"You have suffered under sore bereavements; but this one I know you will number with the sorest. Mrs Nesbit loved you much and ever fervently, and sought to be a comfort to you, and to aid you and make you happy in your work. You and your charge were among her last thoughts and aspirations on earth. In her dying messages you were affectionately included. 'Oh Ayah,' she said, 'when you go back to India, tell all the girls to flee to Jesus.'"

He writes to a young Native friend, not a Christian :—

"You know what things have befallen me, and, I doubt not, sympathise with me in my sorrows. This you will readily do, for your loss is great as well as mine. She that is gone loved you much, and prayed much for you. Her advices and instructions were all from heaven, and were all meant to direct your steps thither. O may you now heartily receive them, and follow them fully. Then will you share with me in my joys, as well as in my sorrows. I feel my loss, but I know her gain. And my own loss I know will soon be made up. I am comforted with regard to it on earth, but I shall forget it in heaven. There loved and lost ones shall be found again, and more than fill the place in the heart they occupied before. These hopes are my joys. O that they were also yours, and your dear companions'! Sinner as I am, I could not entertain them without a divine atonement; and, without an assurance of the same, you will never be able to entertain them either. 'Behold, then, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.' Behold Him, and you will soon see sin removed, heaven opened, and glory and bliss imparted.

You will be able in spirit to follow those who have gone to glory; and, ere long, you will follow them in person. With this desire and prayer on your own behalf, and on behalf of all your fellow teachers and students, to whom I beg to be most kindly remembered, I am, yours in sincere affection."

Mr Nesbit drew up a short notice (alluded to above) of her whom he had lost, which was printed in the *Oriental Christian Spectator*. We give one or two extracts. Speaking of the two sisters, Misses Anna and Hay Bayne, he thus refers to their feelings on their arrival in India, and to the work which they were enabled to accomplish:

"On looking around them, their circumstances and their work, as messengers of God to the natives, appeared to them greatly different from the prospect which had stood before their mind in Scotland. Difficulties and discouragements, which they had not anticipated, crowded on the eye, and depressed the spirit. But 'this is the victory which overcometh, even our faith.' The seen and the present laid them low; but the unseen and the future raised them up. Humbled and sorrowful, they 'sought Jehovah and his strength;' and He sustained and cheered them. Through frequent, and often severe, attacks of illness, they prosecuted the study of Maráthí, and attained the power of reading it with much correctness and fluency. . . . .

"In regard to the younger of the sisters, at least, it cannot be said that any proficiency in *speaking* Maráthí was ever attained. Often was the attainment sought; but excess at once of mental energy and of bodily weakness prevented it. Over-exertion and illness again and again arrested the pursuit of the desired object, and tinged the mind with disappointment, and affected the heart with something of the sickness of hope deferred. Yet—hope never died. She hoped against hope; and, after the lapse of more than ten

years, January 1848, found her grasping the desired possession. . . . .

"It is remarkable how far the scanty utterance above referred to went. The manner, the look, and the tone, often gave a little such force as much seldom has. 'Jesus is the true Saviour; Jesus is the good Saviour; He gave his life for sinners; believe in him; love *Him*,'—these few and simple words, accompanied with the dropping tear, or with the look of tender compassion or solemn earnestness and reverential awe, often formed a better and fuller discourse than one of lengthened argument, or statement, or exhortation. And with the book in her hand, and generally an interpreter by her side, her instruction of the young was very suitable and most impressive. There was a sweetness in her manner that could not be resisted, and, at the same time, an authority that could not be infringed; and these combined made all submissive and attentive, and yet all happy too. Her deep and unbroken solemnity, whenever she spoke of God, and all the marks of reverential regard in her own mind, were eminently calculated to leave on the minds of her youthful audience a salutary impression of His presence, and of His majesty and excellence. And again, when she spoke of this God giving his Son for the salvation of men, her tender expression told that He was good, as He is great, and replete with love, as He is perfect in holiness.

"Such was her religious teaching in Maráthí; but her position did not confine her to this. In such a large city as Bombay, a few of the native females, and many of the native boys and young men, are acquainted with English; and in English—of which her command was most copious and powerful—she dealt out to these, large and precious instruction. . . . . And the memory of those sweet and awful tones, in which in their presence, she sought from God a blessing on

her work, and commended them to the mercy of Christ, and besought on their behalf the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, may well teach them to pray, or renew and strengthen the spirit of prayer. . . . .

" When in January 1848 she was taken so ill, she was devoting much attention to a girls' school established within premises newly occupied after leaving Ambroli; and both school-room and scholars witnessed to the greatness of her diligence and the minuteness of her care. By the little ones who composed this school, she was much *liked;* but she was *loved* by the more advanced girls of the other [the Female Boarding School], some of whom had enjoyed the special tuition of her dear relative, Mrs M. Mitchell. These could be well addressed in English, and profited greatly by her notes to them and conversations with them.

" When the excellent superintendent of the school first heard of the necessity there appeared of her leaving India, the intelligence ' quite overpowered ' her. In this feeling there was involved not only a sense of her own loss, but of that greater loss which ' the precious souls under her care' would sustain. This made the pain of parting singularly poignant."

We quote the beautiful conclusion of the " Notice," both as characteristic of the writer, and of the mode in which his spirit rose easily to the loftiest contemplations, and as embodying a just tribute to the memory of the three devoted sisters of whom he speaks :—

" Thus fell the last of three noble and kindred sacrifices to the cause of the evangelisation of India, and the spiritual regeneration of her daughters. They went out; but they never returned. They toiled, and fainted, and fell; and where they fell, there they lie. Two of them sleep together on India's shore; and the third rests alone in the depths of

India's Ocean. An eminently godly man, now deceased, deeply attached to their father and to them, used to exult in their position among the heathen, and to make that triumph of the 45th Psalm theirs,—

> 'Instead of those thy fathers dear,
> Thy children thou may'st take,
> And, in all places of the earth,
> Them noble princes make.'

But now that these 'prince'-like 'children' are all fallen, where and what would be his triumph or exulting? Would it not be turned into loud lamentation and bitter weeping? These would, indeed, interpose; but though they silenced and stilled it for a time, they could not extinguish it. Softly it would again renew its strains, and on earth itself raise higher and yet higher its swelling notes, till they rose to, and mingled with, the lofty acclaim of heaven. He would see, through these daughters of Europe, and in their stead, daughters of India risen up, 'purified and made white' like them; and by faith he would see the train increasing, till it filled the land. He would see, also, other daughters of Europe constrained by their example to occupy the same prince-like position, and seek the same glorious reward. And yet again, by faith he would see them, though returning to no home on earth, repairing to a better home in the heavens,—following the great Forerunner thither, and their 'works following them,'—the servants where the Master is, and finding it 'far, far better' to be there. And yet again, he would see what is 'far, far better' still, their return in the perfect glory and blessedness of the resurrection, with many daughters equally glorious and blessed by their side; for the LORD will redeem them from death,—He will redeem them from the power of the grave; 'and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with

songs and everlasting joy upon their heads,—they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'"

It has been mentioned that Mr Nesbit's own health had been much impaired before he left India. Although a sea voyage usually did him much good, yet, amidst the "overflowing sorrows" of the recent one, his strength had not much recruited.

Early in 1849 he writes from London to Mrs M. Mitchell:—

"When you penned your last most kind and affectionate letter, I was putting myself under Dr ——'s hands. He has laid me up four times. I had endured such excruciating and exhausting pain before, that the last time he thought it advisable to make me insensible. . . . . Since the doctor's hand has been upon me, I have done very little. I have had intervals of rest to recover strength, but I have not been able to return to my usual habits of labour or engagement. Hence my purposes and plans have fallen greatly into arrears. Eight weeks' suspension, instead of two or three, has materially affected all my arrangements. I deeply sympathise in the sorrows of your affecting letter. My own enable me the better to do so. O may heavenly consolations, too, enable me the better to comfort those that are in any trouble. Let me direct you to Psalm lvi. 8–13. There is abundance for you and your beloved husband, and me, and all, in our pilgrimage. Let us take the words and 'eat them,' and comfort our hearts therewith."

His strength slowly returned. He was a member of the General Assembly of 1849, representing the Presbytery of Bombay. He writes to Dr Wilson—specially referring to the subject which, amidst much to interest, still lay nearest to his heart:—

"We were blessed with an excellent Moderator, whose

appropriate selections of psalms to be sung, and chapters to be read, and whose deeply devotional prayers, greatly served, I doubt not, to promote a right and healthful spirit among all the members. There was, however, no such great and pervading solemnity and prayerfulness as former Assemblies have exhibited. . . . .

"The Report of the Foreign Missions Committee was distinguished by a painful proposal to which the Assembly acceded. The Committee is authorised to limit first Cape-town, and then Caffreland, &c., should the collections and donations of 1849-50 not warrant the continuance of the present rate of expenditure. I hope that this threat will be sufficient to rouse the Church to redoubled liberality in the direction of their Foreign Missions. The Assembly gave me a kind hearing for about an hour. I omitted much I should have wished to say, but not so much as the newspapers might lead you to imagine." . . .

In the address above referred to, which he delivered when the subject of Missions was before the Assembly, he refers in powerful language to the remarkable fact, that at the Disruption all the missionaries had declared their adherence to the Free Church. He then gives an instructive sketch of the progress of the gospel in Western India, contrasting the time when his missionary life commenced, with that when he had quitted India.

"I will tell you, very shortly, what I found the Bombay Presidency in 1827, and what I left it in 1848. And here I would fain speak of religion among Europeans, as well as religion among the natives (for missions to the heathens in India have been one of the greatest causes of the revival and growth of religion among Europeans)—of the two European churches which I found, and the five which I left; of their services increased threefold; of the Sabbath

systematically desecrated by Government, and now, in almost all things, kept sacred; of many merchants' offices open on the Lord's day, and now shut; of almost all private families sending their servants to market on that day, and now a large proportion of them forbidding them to go; of shops frequented by Europeans, but kept by Parsis, plying their usual work on the Lord's day, but now locked up, and affording their keepers a day of rest if they would have it (unhappily, however, but without any guilt on the part of Europeans, perverted to what in Popish countries would be called a holiday); of ships in the harbour unprovided for with religious instruction, but now provided for; of no religious periodicals for Europeans, and now two of that character. I would tell you particularly of these things; but I forbear, and turn to the natives. I found one chapel for natives, which was American. Now there are two chapels, one having been built for Indo-Britons; and two preaching rooms, used as chapels, in which the natives assemble as in church. There was a Bible Society formed, but it was exceedingly small. Its meeting was attended only by members of committee, and these amounted only to about six individuals. The Bible was translating, and a first edition of the New Testament in Marathi could be had; but the Old Testament was almost unattempted. Now the Bible may be had complete; and the translation, in successive editions, has been much improved. There was no Tract Society; now there is one, which supplies tracts to several missions, and to all gratuitously. There were a few tracts in Marathi, printed with missionary funds; now there are ten times the number of distinct tracts, and ten times the supply,—and most of them printed with the funds of the Tract Society. There were no books for the natives; now there are, and that most valuable book, the Pilgrim's Pro-

gress, is one of the number. Formerly there was no such thing thought of as selling tracts or portions of Scripture to the natives; now sales are effected among them to a considerable extent. Those of the American Mission, in the year 1847, amounted to £10, a large sum to get from natives for Christian books. There was no religious periodical for natives; now there are two, viz.—1st, 'The Dawn of Wisdom,' partly in English, and partly in Marathi; 2d, 'The Native's Friend,' entirely in English. These are, to some extent, bought by the natives. In the Island of Bombay there was one Mission, which was American; now there are five—one American; two English; two Scotch—one belonging to the Established Church, the other to the Free Church. In the Presidency there were four missions, now there are fourteen."

In the last sentence, the word *Missions* means, or is a misprint for, *Mission Stations*. When Mr Nesbit spoke, the Missions in the Bombay Presidency were, at the highest estimate, only eight; and some of them were numerically very feeble.

There is also an instructive contrast drawn between Scotland as he had left it, and Scotland as he now found it:—

"Have you not found that liberality is at once expansive and self-supporting,—that the surest way to have is to give,—that there is that which maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing, and there is who maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches? You are learning this by experience; and you have it still further to learn. When I left Scotland, I found men giving one guinea a-year for the advancement of religion in the world; and now I find the same men giving twenty guineas; nay, I find thousands given where ones or tens were given before. 'Give, and it shall be given unto you,' is the law between man and man, and

still more so between man and God. You have been giving to God these several years; and if God had given you nothing but peace, even that would have been an ample repayment. What losses are now being sustained in peaceless France, Germany, and Italy! and what gain have you in the enjoyment of the single blessing of peace in this favoured land! Let the lesson of liberality be fairly learned, and all our good and godly objects will be well supported and promoted."

During the rest of this year he was busily employed in endeavouring to arouse the mind and heart of the Church to the overwhelming claims of the Missionary enterprise. In October he writes to the Rev. Dr Tweedie, Convener of the Mission Committee, and gives a list of thirty-six parishes towards the north which he had visited since the Assembly, delivering one, two, or even, in some cases, three addresses, according to the importance of each place. He had previously visited parishes in four southern Presbyteries. He then continues:—

"I rejoice that every where I met with a candid reception on the part both of ministers and people; and I trust that the effect of the statements I was enabled to make with regard to the great dishonour done to God in heathen lands, and the misery and hopelessness of the heathen themselves, have been, and will be, blessed to an increase of love and zeal. I took many opportunities of setting the necessities of the Foreign Mission department of the Church's work before them, and earnestly exhorted them that, on the scale on which they had begun to build, they would go on to finish: if they had not counted the cost at first, they had found it now, and must rise in zeal and liberality to its amount.

"I have much reason to be thankful that, though I at

one time suffered severely from the changes of cold and heat to which I was subjected, I have, within the last three or four weeks of comparative quiet, and of more equable weather, regained what I had lost, and that I am now in the enjoyment of good health."

He seems to have kept no journal at this period; but we can glean interesting items from brief letters written to friends. He writes to Mr M. Mitchell:—

"*Edinburgh, Oct.* 1849.—My Dear Friend,—I freely confess that I fall far below you in correspondence, and that 'deficiency' is chargeable on me, not on you. You will remember, however, how I have been distracted by the still unfinished perplexity of ——, and that 'many fatigues' have been followed with constant travelling, preaching, and lecturing, in June, July, August, and September. It was only on the 11th current that I returned from my northern tour; and now there is no time to rest. Unless the country be better informed, and more roused to action, there will be another year of distressing deficiency [in the Mission funds]. I hope, therefore, during the winter months, to visit all the principal places in Scotland accessible by railway. If I can get up to London in spring, that is as much as I expect. I trust my tour has been to some extent blessed. I have felt more than ever the bearing of missions on 'Jehovah's glory,' and have urged that view of the subject, taking, generally, as my text, Psalm xcvi. 3. 'The mind of Christ,' expressed in '*I will declare Thy name*' is the soul of missions. Without it they are dead, and their death will soon be an obvious reality even to the blindest.

"Some friends here have expressed the same wish as yourself in regard to the publication of my addresses, and I hope that I shall not be obliged to leave this country till it be accomplished. But the duty of speaking is so pressing

and so constant, that the work of writing and printing appears in the vista of futurity with no little darkness overshadowing it.* . . . . Not much moved by 'overturnings' abroad, the country is at least not a little aroused by afflictions at home. The cholera has called the people with considerable effect to humiliation and mourning. We are to have our fast-day on the 18th, and, I trust, it will be a solemn and heart-searching and moving occasion. Meetings on behalf of the Sabbath, highly honouring to God, have just been held; and, if the Sabbath-desecrating Government do not yield, it will, I trust, be overturned, and give way to another, which, if it do not honour God more, will pay more deference to the feelings of religious men. I much like and cordially sympathise in your remarks on God's doings in Europe, and the reflex influence they should have on Britain. One unspeakable consolation is, that the Bible is penetrating not only places, but minds, inaccessible and impervious to it before."

He then says, on the subject of Christian union:—

"I much rejoice in your Evangelical Alliance meeting at Poona. It is much to express, in the face of timid schismatics on the one hand, and proud self-sufficient ones on the other, the noble love and large catholicity of genuine Christianity. You may be called, as a body, to great practical movements; but even if you are not, your very meetings and conferences will be attended with practical effects neither few nor small."

He continues,—still entering with full heart into the details of Indian work:—

"I am delighted to hear such good tidings of the Board ing-school; of dear ——'s deliverance from fear, and of her

* These addresses, unhappily, were never published; nor does it now seem possible to recover them.

apparent choice of Jehovah as her God. It will, I trust, be a holy happy day to you, when she is admitted into the church. And you trust that her sister too is set free from the chains of sin,—and that they have another little sister, of kindred spirit, though of another nation, and from another land! The Lord increase you more and more, you and your children! Your Romanist meeting in the Institution is most interesting and promising."

All his letters abound with loving salutations to the dear native brethren, whose joys and sorrows were his own:—

"Give my affectionate sympathies to dearest Hormazdji, and tell him that Christ 'prays for him that his faith fail not.' Love to dearest Narayan." . . .

The following testimony is from one who was 'slow to speak:'—

"I rejoice in the piety of almost all our Free Church ministers. But impression and effect are rare in the land. Even a sound and full knowledge is not diffused through congregations. But perhaps sufficient time has not been afforded. . . . The cordiality with which the people listen to the gospel and missionary addresses, especially in the country districts, is very cheering and encouraging." . . .

From one like him, the following allusion to his bereavement is full of pathos:—

"Your present happy prospects shew the darkness of mine more vividly. Years look fearfully gloomy; but the Lord brings me through the day."

He writes to his sister-in-law, during a visit to Ireland:—

"*Belfast, April* 1850.—I reached this in safety on Saturday last. The Clyde, Bute, Arran, all passed under review again, and re-awakened solemn thoughts and tender feelings. How much do these names recall and revive to yourself! In Greenock I called on several parties, whom I can but name. . .

On Sabbath evening I gave Mr Macnaughtan's people a sermon, chiefly missionary, yet not unsuited to a communion day. Last night I gave a missionary address to a congregational, and to-night I expect to give one to a general, meeting. Besides Belfast, I expect to visit Derry, Coleraine, Randalstown, and Newry. After that, I have still another meeting at Greenock (a Jewish one), and meetings at Helensburgh, Dunoon, Roseneath, Dumbarton, Irvine, and Hamilton, to accomplish before I can return to Edinburgh. Large spaces of leisure open in the distance; but they all disappear when we come near them."

In addition to the general work of arousing the mind of the Church on the subject of Missions, Mr Nesbit undertook to raise a sum of money for the erection of Mission buildings at Bombay. The first great necessity was a building for the Institution. The health both of teachers and taught was suffering in consequence of miserable accommodation. Mr Nesbit undertook to collect three thousand pounds, which, it was hoped, might suffice to raise a sufficiently commodious building. He found the task a very laborious and tedious one,—it tried his health, and detained him in Britain when he was anxious to join his colleagues in Bombay; but he persevered. It is right, however, that his emphatic utterances as to the sadness of the necessity thus laid on him should be recorded. He sorrowfully says:—

"'It was not reason' that our friends here should have kept me in Scotland collecting money, instead of gathering and building 'living stones' in India. But this unreasonable thing they have done. . . . I greatly grieve over your 'strength rapidly ebbing away,' and your fear of being obliged to leave Bombay for six months. You say rightly that I have a hard work before me. I fear it will detain

me far too long; and in the mean time both your health and that of Dr Wilson will probably suffer, and the interests of the Mission suffer with you. Mr —— has given £200, and Mr ——, £100, which have greatly helped to relieve my toil. . . . . For some days I have walked about begging all day, and writing till one or two in the morning."

Again:—

"I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to come out, and yet dreading to come to a houseless Mission. Dr Duff thinks I should plainly say, 'I will not go till you give me the means of putting a roof over my brethren's head and my own.' . . .

Yet it was only the *first* great want of the Mission that he could attempt to supply; others scarcely less pressing remained. He proceeds:—

"We must have missionary buildings as well as an Institution; not a building for one missionary, and none for the rest, but buildings for all. Converts' apartments ought also to be provided for."*

In 1850 he bade farewell to the General Assembly. We give a few passages from a long and interesting address:—

"With regard to my brethren from India and myself, there are indeed many pleasant things to detain us in Scotland. There are endearments and relationships with which our hearts make us well acquainted. Birth-places, haunts of childhood and youth, places of fathers' sepulture, and a hundred other pleasing associations, which combine to de-

* None of these other wants have as yet been supplied,—the Institution building being still in debt. In Bombay, where house rent is very high, this is felt to be exceedingly trying to missionaries and converts alike. They are often forced to take houses in unhealthy and unsuitable localities, from the impossibility of procuring dwellings at a cost at all proportioned to their incomes.

tain us in this country. There is also the general atmosphere of society, the purity of your homes, the prevailing confidence between man and man, and, above all, the existence of a fervent and vital Christianity. Your Christian Sabbaths, too, would induce me to stay in Scotland. They have no Sabbaths in India. There the ploughman follows his plough, the artizan his craft, and the shopman opens his shop; and they never enjoy a day of rest for man, or a day of glory for God. The rich ministrations of Scotland would also detain me here. In short, I have felt it quite a luxury to live in the midst of my friends in Scotland; and I only wish I could transfer their opinions, feelings, influences, to the land of my adoption. Dr Duff has lately given an account of the power and grandeur of Britain abroad. We feel the influence of that power and grandeur in India; but in Scotland we are made acquainted with their springs and causes, which are to be found in your churches, in your Christian schools, in your Bible-reading and prayer-offering families. These are the sources of our power and grandeur abroad; and if I may confine my attention to one element of our dominion in India, I would say it is this, We speak the truth, and the natives do not. . . . The green fields, the woods, the hills, and the rivers of Scotland, would also induce me to remain at home. In India we cannot ascend a mountain, or view a charming landscape, or visit the confluence of two rivers, without having our feelings shocked by the sight of gods, idols, temples, and other signs of idolatry and superstition. . . . The features of India are indeed superior. The magnificent forests of India smile at the little woods of Scotland. But the latter have a peculiar charm. . . . The Gospel has clothed Scotland with its present garb. The Gospel has turned its bareness and barrenness into fruitfulness and

beauty. The Gospel has covered it with fields and villages, and towns and cities. I have often wished to bring the Balaams of the East to see the effects, on a large scale, of Christian ordinances in the West. I am sure they could not help exclaiming, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth; as the gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted, as the cedar-trees beside the waters.'

"With all these things to detain me, I have no thought or desire to remain in Scotland; for the Lord has called me to go back to India. *Go*, saith He, 'declare my glory among the heathen, my wonders among all people.' Go where 'they have not heard my fame, nor seen my glory; and declare my glory among the Gentiles.' Ignorance of God calls me to make Him known. . . .

"The rising church of India calls me to leave Scotland. I do not speak of the whole church in India; but to that in the districts of Bombay and Poona, in Western India, with which I am more intimately connected. My labouring and often wearied brethren call me to India. They are in a place unsuitable and noisome,—a place without a suitable roof or suitable walls, and altogether in a distressing condition, so that they are often compelled to interrupt their labours from sheer exhaustion. I am called by my brethren who have gone down to the grave, one of whom, Professor Henderson, died so lately as the 4th of the present month. I am called to a land of disease and mortality,—a land of many deaths and many buried hopes. But Christ was an exile from heaven for his servants; and we must be exiles for Him. We are indeed 'citizens of heaven,' even while dwelling on the earth; and if Rome sent her sons to burning Lybia, or freezing Scythia, and they went at her

bidding, the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all, may well send her children wherever her interests point, and her children might well be glad and forward to go."

"'And he went,' writes a friend, whom he had cheered by his visits,—'the romance of India had faded into darkness; but the love of Christ burned with a steadier flame, and he hastened back.'"

His labours in collecting money, however, were not yet over, nor did they cease till February of the succeeding year. But for the interposition of some generous friends, they might have detained him still longer. The delay tried him; and we can perceive that a shade of disappointment overhung his spirit in consequence. All the kindlier, therefore, were his recollections of the cordiality with which a helping hand had been, in time of need, extended by such men as the Buchans, the Hendersons, the Macfies, and others.*

We have repeatedly seen that Mr Nesbit had felt his own spirit greatly refreshed by the intercourse he had enjoyed with Christian friends during his sojourn at home. He

* Mr Nesbit's reminiscences of his peregrinations through Scotland—as he occasionally detailed them in India—were interesting, and sometimes important, as illustrative of the knowledge and feeling prevailing at home on the subject of Missions. One gentleman, to whom he had explained the wants of the Mission, coldly remarked, "Well, but, I daresay you missionaries make a very good thing of it in India." Any one who knew Mr Nesbit can imagine how such a speech would take him aback, till he recovered himself, and gravely said, he hoped they made the best thing possible of it—they laid up treasures in heaven. Let it not be supposed, however, that all his recollections were of this kind. Far otherwise; the intelligence, the sympathy, he found in many quarters in connection with the cause of missions, and which he believed to be a growing intelligence, a growing sympathy, greatly cheered him. For example, when he reached Kelloe, his old and valued friend Mr Buchan asked how far short he was of the amount required, and, on being told, at once handed him the sum, which was something considerable,—thus relieving his mind of no small burden.

would have thoroughly agreed with an important remark which we have somewhere seen ascribed to one of the most experienced and respected of Indian missionaries—Lacroix of Calcutta—to the effect that a mental renovation and bracing up needs to be sought in Europe no less than a physical one. The following note will shew the feelings with which he looked back on the happy intercourse he had enjoyed with the inmates of the manses—but not the manses only—of his fatherland:—

"*Feb.* 1851.—. . . . About a week ago I came to the conclusion of my £3000 for mission buildings. In Langton and Kelloe the conclusion was reached. The concluding day was a happy one.

"I remember your kind aid with much gratitude and pleasure; and I have many rich spots to look back upon in the fields I have traversed, and much praise and blessing to render to 'the God of all grace.' In full sympathy with us in our work you will rejoice and give thanks with us also. I rejoice to hear of your own and your excellent husband's welfare, happiness, and prosperity. May your darling child's tongue be touched with a live coal from off Jehovah's altar; and may he be spared and fitted to speak and minister like his father. Many, many thanks for your most kind and touching note. It melts, yet comforts, in the midst of these distressing days. The depression caused by partings, added to fatigue and want of sleep, has aggravated a deep-seated cold of some standing, and given me my old Indian fever and ague. But under the kind and generous friends with whom I am staying,* I am recovering my vigour; and I shall, I trust, be able to go out at least by the 20th proximo. I may say, that if ever I consoled or strengthened you, the

* He was under the hospitable roof, we believe, of Mr Nisbet of Berners Street, London.

gift appears small indeed compared to what I received at your hands. You will still uphold me by your communings with 'the Comforter,' and the requests you spread out before Him. . . . You and your dear husband must bid me farewell in your prayers. Yours, in much Christian affection."

It is a blessed thing when the experience of the Christian is in accordance with the desire of the Apostle, as expressed in his letter to the Romans, "That I may be comforted *together with you*, by the mutual faith both of you and me." Such was Mr Nesbit's experience; his visits refreshed others, while he was himself refreshed.

The Rev. John Crawford, who had been a much-loved associate in India, during the first part of Mr Nesbit's missionary life, and who had received him with all affection during his visit to Ireland, writes as follows:—

"Much as I used to be delighted with him in the Bazaar in India, dealing with the subtle Hindu and Mohammadan, I was yet far more delighted with the simplicity and purity of his piety, the closeness of his reasoning, and the overwhelming effect of his illustrations in pleading the cause of Christ for a heathen world. I know that seldom has the same missionary zeal been aroused, or so deep an impression been made on the people of Belfast, as that caused by the speeches and discourses of the truly devoted missionary, Robert Nesbit. It was the same in Antrim, and in all the other towns and villages in the north, where he had the privilege of pleading Christ's cause."

A respected father in the church speaks thus:—

"I do not know that I ever came in contact with a more lovely character, so exalted in sentiment, so pure and disinterested in aim, so refined in mental culture, so self-denied and devoted in his Master's cause. We had much confiding and affectionate intercourse, and I always looked

forward to a visit from him with intense delight. His stores of literary, theological, and general information, and his power of communicating to others without the slightest appearance of conscious superiority, rendered him a most instructive and endearing companion. But, above all, was his piety, at once enlightened, profound, and habitual;—the sunshine of heaven seemed to rest on his soul, and the glory of God to be the ever-presiding motive of conduct."

Another minister writes :—

" No one could be long in his company without remarking the holiness which breathed from every word he spoke, and sat on the very folds of his raiment. ' He was a good man,' and ever intent on glorifying Christ. He had the power beyond most of bringing spiritual truth into contact with every detail of relative life. Not more was he a missionary in India than in Scotland; and many a youth and child will rise up to tell that it was Mr Nesbit who first led their thoughts above the earth."

CHAPTER XII.

RETURN TO INDIA—ASPECT OF THE WORK—VARIED ENGAGEMENTS—TOURS—BAPTISMS—DEATH OF CONVERTS.

Mr Nesbit left England in the end of March 1851. He had a severe attack of fever soon after leaving Marseilles, and was, in consequence, detained a fortnight at Malta. He writes to his sister-in-law from Cairo:—

"*April* 18.—I lost no time in visiting the largest of the Pyramids. To-day I have been seeing the city itself. Its present state is a great improvement on former years and ages. But the capital itself shews the 'baseness of the kingdom' still.

"I have seen of late most interesting localities. St Paul's Bay in Malta, where the great apostle was wrecked; what is believed to be the site of St Mark's church, in Alexandria, and the burying-place of Athanasius; the part of the Nile where Moses is believed to have been exposed, &c. But I have looked upon them with a good deal of languor, and have, I fear, derived but little benefit from the sight. How transient man and his works! How abiding God and His plans! He is the 'dwelling-place of His people;' and, amidst all changes and sorrows, we take refuge in Him. We rest in the assurance that He is carrying out and will complete His great plan of wisdom, holiness, and

love. . . . . I had again a little fever at sea. My cough is, I trust, almost gone." . . .

He reached Bombay on the 4th May, and there many an affectionate greeting met him. And though many memories were now all around, that but served to deepen his sense of desolation, yet with calm devotedness he resumed his work. A few days after his arrival, he writes the following letter to Dr Tweedie, which not only reveals his own state of mind, but gives an encouraging and instructive account of the position of the Mission :—

"*May* 9. 1851.— . . . Our passage from Suez to Bombay was a very quick one; and we arrived here early on the morning of the 4th May. The day was the Sabbath, and some received their first intelligence of my arrival from our dear Parsi brother Dhanjibhai's prayer at the early morning service at Ambroli. I attended the Free Church in the evening, and received affectionate welcomes. Expressions of sympathy and love come in on all sides, and serve to sustain me on the present trying occasion. The date of my return to Bombay was within two days of that of my departure from it in 1848. That day was one of most painful anxiety and dark foreboding; these are days of sad memories and mournful associations. Time and place, persons and objects, all combine to set in contrast the past and present, and speak of most precious life departed, the richest possessions gone, and the best solace and support taken away. But 'Jehovah liveth, and blessed be my Rock.' 'He is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.' 'He is my stay, and comfort, and strength.' . . .

"I lament over the sad imperfection of my surrender of myself to God, and my efforts for God in the past. Oh, that the future may witness better things, and more blessed

results! I trust that it is with a self-abasement and self-abandonment scarcely known when I first came to India, that I afresh devote and dedicate myself to the Lord's work among the heathen. 'Who is sufficient' for it? is, I trust, more than ever the language of my heart. May the soul rise in confidence and might, enabled to add, 'Our sufficiency is of God.'

"It is now within a few months of twenty-four years since I entered upon that 'good work' at first. I enter upon it again with a far larger view of its immensity, and a far deeper sense of its immense difficulty. But with this I have also, I trust, a deeper sense of its preciousness, honour, and blessedness; and of the duty, necessity, and privilege of engaging in it. More than ever I see and feel it to be emphatically the 'Lord's work;' that not only its highest, but its first, reference is to Him; that His dishonoured name calls us to it far more loudly than man's ruined estate; and that we shew ourselves the basest of children (if we do not indeed prove that we belong to quite another family), when we are careless to vindicate a Father's character where it is most aspersed, and to declare His glory where it is most 'turned into shame.'

"In resuming my work, I see much to make me 'thank God and take courage.' In the evangelization of India, and of this part of India in particular, a beginning has been made; and progress has to some extent become a reality. Very different is the Presidency of Bombay from what it was in 1827, when I first set my foot upon its borders. Instead of the almost total darkness of that period, a general knowledge of Christianity in its facts, claims, and promises, is now largely diffused. Instead of its unmingled heathenism, native sentiment is now much modified and swayed by the presence and pressure of Christianity. Instead of its men

tal and moral torpor, the native mind is now awakened, and the native conscience quickened to life and sensibility. Besides this general effect of the gospel, there are not wanting cases in which the result specially aimed at has been realised. The native mind and heart have been won by the truth, and to the truth; native converts have appeared, and native churches have sprung up in several localities, that, taken together, number hundreds of members (there were none, or next to none, on the same ground in 1827); and what is a matter of the highest importance and brightest promise, several of these members have become able and faithful ministers of the word. The results are small compared with the ends contemplated; but they are great compared with the means used. It is wonderful that our slender and almost faithless, prayerless work should have had any effect at all. The Lord's acknowledgment of it shews how willing He is to bless us; and if He has blessed us in the lowest efforts, what will He do in the highest? What will He do when our faith rises to the heights of holy boldness, and when His sons and His daughters, carrying on His work, shall give Him reason to say, 'O man, O woman, great is thy faith!' Then will it 'be unto us even as we will.'

"In giving information and exhortation to my fellow-Christians when at home, I seldom neglected to ask their prayers for my missionary brethren and myself. My circumstances and immediate prospects urge me to renew the request with the strongest importunity now. This kind of 'help' we need more than any other (2 Cor. i. 11); and this kind of 'labour' (Col. iv. 12) is of most consequence to our success. O that all God's children in Scotland were Epaphrases, fervently engaged in it! . . . ."

"The native church appears to prosper and be in health;

and both conversion and inquiry throw a pleasing light upon its state and prospects.

"This hot month is the period of vacation for our Institution. I shall be able to speak of it anon. Other duties, in the mean time, engage us. One of these is the visitation of the Beni-Israel to the south of Bombay. On the 12th inst., dear Mr M. Mitchell and I purpose exploring their villages, examining the schools established among them, and preaching the Messiah to all of them, young and old. With a grateful and happy remembrance of my intercourse with yourself and other dear friends connected with the mission at home, I am," &c.

In a week from the time of his arrival in Bombay, Mr Nesbit was engaged in the missionary tour referred to in the above letter. It was necessarily brief—for the rainy season was close at hand—yet not without interest.

It is important to note the matured views of this experienced missionary regarding the place and value of English education as a branch of evangelistic labour. He writes to Dr Tweedie:—

"25*th June*.—I feel more than ever the necessity of giving time and thought and energy to the Institution, as matters now stand. Unless our school be first rate, it cannot subsist. The Government Institution has such advantages over us in rich and numerous scholarships, in monitorships and teacherships, &c. in connections with the great, and in the prospects which such connections hold out, that unless we make an extraordinary effort, we cannot hope to succeed. We are much more disadvantageously placed here than our brethren are at Calcutta and Madras. At these places the Government charges pretty highly for the education it gives; here it imparts it almost free.

"Caste is much firmer here than in any other part of

India. We cover the seat of the late Hindu empire, which, but a few years ago, lifted up its head so high. The Maratha Brahmans, and the Maratha people, are the proudest and strictest Pharisees of Hinduism. In these circumstances of peculiar difficulty, we must make an extraordinary effort here; and may I not add, you must give us special countenance and aid from home.*

"All of us, I believe, would rather be preaching than teaching; and, we believe, the former is God's great appointed means for the evangelisation of the heathen. But with the view of raising better and more permanent preachers than ourselves—with a view to the state of these great cities, in which a non-christian education is turning hundreds of native youth into infidels,—and with a view to the expressed wishes of our Church, to take up specially this department of evangelistic effort, we cordially take a large part in the labours of education, and strive to render your Institution as efficient as possible. We very much desire, however, to give ourselves to the more spiritual departments of labour; and that we may be able to do so, we earnestly request aid, in the persons of learned and scientific Christian men."

The last sentence has special force, on account of the loss of the valuable services of Professor Henderson. He had joined the Institution on the 2d of January 1846, but had been compelled by completely broken health to quit India early in 1849. He died in England the year following, much lamented by the Mission, and all the friends of Christian education in Bombay.

His pleading for help is still stronger a month later:—

* It may be right to remind the reader, that the Government schools in Western India also excluded the lowest castes. The Mission schools, of course, did not. In an intensely superstitious community, this gave the former an immense advantage over the latter.

"*Bombay, 25th July* 1851.—We held our summer (here it would be called our rains) meeting of Presbytery at Poona early this month. Mr James Mitchell's overburdening duties, and the inadequacy of the agency at the station generally, occupied much of our attention. The only alleviating plan we could think of was that of assistance from Bombay by each of us for a short time, as we could render it. Mr Murray Mitchell was the first that was expected to render his proportion of aid. But we plan in vain, unless the Lord plan with us and by us. The very day after the Presbytery closed its meetings, our dear friend was seized with a most severe and dangerous attack of inflammation. . . . . The medical attendant considers that he has made a most narrow escape. He was, indeed, sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on us also.

"In my last letter, I spoke with bright hope of the prospects of our Institution, better supplied with teachers than for a long time past. Now these prospects seem to be overcast. . . . . In other lands it may be well to occupy a station with as few agents as will barely suffice, but in this land of rapid disease, and frequent and sudden death, there should always, if possible, be an extra labourer."

He then proceeds to advert to his private classes:

"In addition to my engagements at the school, I have, in common with my brethren, classes at my own house. These classes are composed of our own more advanced pupils, —of young men from the Government and Missionary Institutions,—and of others engaged in business. The attendance is good on week days, but it is still better on the Lord's day. Last Sabbath it was twenty-nine. I hope this is a symptom of advancement that will not disappear. It is to me a new feature in the aspect of native society. Since my

return to India the classes referred to have been three or four times better attended than they ever were before I left it. A great degree of excitement prevails in regard to the Scriptures. Some despise them, and are anxious to refute the missionary, and to add triumph to scorn. Some are afraid of them; they may, they suspect, lay hold of them some day, and impose on them their peculiar restraints; and they are anxious to find legitimate cause and legitimate means to 'break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from them.' Some are favourably inclined towards them, and defend them against scorners and objectors; and they are anxious to find evidences and answers suited to their purpose. Thus is the native mind fairly astir; and we feel a heavy responsibility resting upon us in regard to it. Human help in the form of the very best exposition we greatly need; but O for that 'mouth and wisdom' from the 'Word' Himself, which all our adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

In October he refers with much joy to the licensing of another native preacher, Mr Narayan Sheshadri, who had now finished his preparatory studies, and passed a very satisfactory examination. Mr Nesbit writes to Dr Tweedie:—

"Eight years before I had put many solemn questions as to his belief and experience in regard to the gospel generally; and it once more fell to me, as Moderator of the Presbytery, to put questions of equally solemn import, and of still higher aspect. . . . . It was touching to think that we could not recall to mind a blot or a backsliding in any part of his course. O that he may still be 'kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation,' and by a yet mightier power, through a stronger faith, unto the effectual announcement of salvation to thousands of his countrymen!

"On the 28th of September, the first Sabbath after receiv-

ing his 'licence', he preached in the Mission Lecture-Room at Ambroli in the morning, and in the Free Church in the evening. Several of his young native friends had come to witness his appointment as a probationer; but far more attended to hear him address the congregation of the Free Church. They saw and heard the Brahman for once engaged in the work he claims as peculiarly his own—that of conveying the knowledge of the Supreme; and they found him doing so on a much larger scale than his Brahmanical fathers had ever contemplated. . . . . His text was, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men,' &c. I remarked to him that he appeared to have more self-possession before a large congregation than he had in the Presbytery. 'There were many praying for me,' was his simple and pathetic, and as it were, instinctive reply.

"At one of our late meetings of Presbytery, Mr Vincente de Cunha appeared before us with the request, that he might be taken under our care as a student in preparation for the ministry. Mr Peyton, you will remember, is another student under the care of the Presbytery.

"In my last communication I adverted especially to the readiness of young educated natives to attend our classes. My own morning class was increasing at the time I wrote; and went on increasing. Even two or three Parsis joined it. This appears to have been too much for Parsi inquisitors to bear; and one of the Parsi newspapers accordingly denounced attendance on any such meetings. The same opponents of the truth spread reports calculated to alarm the Hindu community—specifying the numbers and caste of several Hindus that were about to be baptized. The consequence was, that the Parsi young men disappeared; and the number of the Hindus was not a little diminished. One Sabbath morning, after we had finished our readings, I re-

marked that the attendance was considerably smaller than usual. 'An alarm,' said they, 'has spread throughout the town, and parents are unwilling to allow their children to come.' 'We,' said two of them in particular, who were brothers, 'we were also forbidden this morning by our father; but we thought this a case in which another Father must dictate; and we obeyed Him, and came.' Are these two young men Christians? In Britain you would naturally say, yes. But we have now several who are only 'almost persuaded to be Christians'—and remain heathen still,—some not far from the kingdom, yet not in it; and many who would much like to be Christians, if they could be so with a multitude, and escape singularity, and shame and loss, and who fainting, sighing for liberty, nevertheless prefer their chains.

"O that you might get from the mighty God, strength and decision for the weak and wavering, and the sense of an imperious necessity to embrace and profess Christ for all!"

Mr Nesbit continued to take a deep interest in Female education, particularly in the Boarding School. He writes to a friend at home:—

". . . . Among those that welcomed me on the day of my arrival, the girls of the Female Boarding School were not the last. . . . . They have made great progress within the last three years. They know English nearly as well as their own language. They sing with a melody and harmony which I do not remember to have heard in any school in Britain."

With reference to the above it must be noted, that the Boarding School was much indebted to the Rev. H. P. Cassidy, now a Baptist missionary in Poona. Himself an enthusiast in sacred music, he succeeded in imparting to the pupils much of his own feeling, and something of his skill.

Every visitor must have been struck, as well as Mr Nesbit, with the pleasing sight that the band of native children presented as they sang, evidently with fulness of delight, their beautiful hymns in English and Marathi. In the latter, even the youngest girl had soon learned to take a happy share. He continues, writing to the same friend:—

"I took a particular interest in your —— as being specially bound up with her that is gone. The death of the one appears to have been the life of the other. —— has become a tall girl, and is shooting up to womanhood. She appears to be one of the 'children that walk in the truth.'

"I visit the school and conduct religious exercises in it twice a week. . . . . My own house is next the school, and I have easy access to its inmates, and they to me.' . . . .

"Persevere, therefore, dear Christian friends, persevere in effort, in self-denial, in gifts and sacrifices. Persevere above all in the struggles of prayer. These will help our warfare most of all. Hold up your hands, and we shall prevail. You are in a comparatively quiet and elevated position; we have gone down into the battle. Let us not be driven back in the tumultuous strife."

We find him, as soon as the May vacation of 1852 arrived, again on a missionary tour. An incident occurred which gives rise to a train of thought of a remarkable and, on the whole, very encouraging character. He writes to Dr Tweedie:—

"Neither our numbers nor our efforts are any thing like what they ought to be; they bear a miserable proportion to the extent and difficulty of the field and the work. Yet God has not withheld His blessing. He has done 'great things for us,' compared with our small things for Him. We are often slow to acknowledge this; and our humility, real or affected, swallows up our gratitude. And as for our ene-

mies among our own countrymen, they generally do not acknowledge any effect of our work at all; they scout at it as a fond imagination, and laugh us to scorn. Not so with the Natives themselves. They acknowledge, because they know, that a work is going on among them subversive of Hinduism, and introductory of a new system of opinion and practice; and of this work they ascribe to missionaries a goodly share.

"To render this matter clear and sure enough, I send you a translation of part of a Marathi work lately published in Bombay, on the 'Principles of Hinduism." The author is one of the highly paid vernacular teachers in the Government Institution, and is decidedly a learned and clever man. Mr Murray Mitchell and I fell in with him on our tour in the Konkan in May. He soon brought us into high argument; and long and obstinate was the battle we fought with him. We did not know who he was during the discussion; but, on leaving him, we asked his name, and found that we had been contending with a defender of Hinduism, who had the singular boldness to fulfil his office by writing and publishing a book.

"In a part of the chapter of which I send a translation, he refers to *liberal* societies formed among the educated youth of the native community, holding and disseminating opinions subversive of Hinduism. The *Transcendental Society* has many members, not only in Bombay, but throughout the Presidency. The *Unitarian Society* is one I have heard of only within the last few days. Both profess to be theistical; but the latter, I presume, keeps nearer to revelation. These societies and movements, as well as the conversions by the missionaries, are rightly viewed by Gangádhar Shástrí, as tending to that common end on which his attention almost exclusively fixes,—the destruction of

Hinduism. Under the good and overruling hand of the Lord, they are leading, I trust, to something better—the establishment of the truth as it is in Jesus, throughout the length and breadth of India."*

* The following is an extract from the work referred to :—

"In 1814 all Hindostan became subject to the English ; and since that time the ministers of the Christian religion have, by their instructions, turned the minds of many from Hinduism to Christianity. This work of conversion is still going on ; and doubtless thousands of Hindus will forsake their own religion and become Christians. The Hindus are an ignorant people, and wanting in judgment ; hence the Government, with a view to their improvement, has graciously devoted large sums of money to the support of numerous schools, in which many have received a liberal education. Of these, one of the most distinguished was the late Bál Gangádhar Shastrí, who, after comparing Hinduism with other religions, regarded it as superior to all others, and devoutly observed it until the time of his death. Others, also, who received their education at the same time, remained firm in their attachment to the Hindu religion.

"Of those who have subsequently received an education, a large portion wholly pervert it, by abandoning and seeking to destroy their ancestral faith. They do not even put the mark on the forehead, which is the distinguishing sign of Hinduism. The religious washings, the appointed daily and occasional rites and ceremonies, as well as those which are left voluntary, are all held in contempt. They deny that caste is of Divine appointment ; the rites for the repose of the dead are abandoned as useless ; all religions are declared to be false, and those who adhere to them are regarded as fools. Such is the course adopted by these persons, many of whom are of good caste. Their first object seems to be to destroy the religion of their fathers. And if such are the first fruits of their education, what must the end be ? The Hindus are, as it were, one family ; and the Hindu religion should be honoured by them as an amiable, benevolent father. But if those of high standing in the family thus seek to destroy this religion, then assuredly it must perish under the assaults of external and internal foes. Indeed, if the Hindus themselves seek to overthrow Hinduism, external assailants may relax their efforts, and quietly look on while it is destroyed by its own children. Against foreign enemies we might contend with some hope of success ; but what shall be done when traitors within set fire to the citadel ?

"The ancient and noble edifice of Hinduism is now on all sides stoutly assailed by the adherents of a hostile faith ; and we are filled with dismay at finding that there is also treason within. No wonder that the venerable structure is already nodding to its fall. I, by means of this little book, seek to prop up the building ; but when its size and its ruinous state is

Adverting now, for a moment, to the man rather than the missionary, we may observe that the friends among whom Mr Nesbit moved could not help perceiving, since his return to India, that the sadness which overhung his spirit did not appear to abate. "Time but the impression deeper makes." There was perfect resignation to the will of God; but in a heart not naturally framed for solitude, there seemed a growing sense of desolation. To all around him he had long been, and now more than ever was, an object of intense interest, and sympathy, and love; each was anxious to console, and each did, in proportion as he or she had access to the sorrowing heart, administer a measure of comfort. Meanwhile the sufferer himself battled, as a Christian ought, against excessive and paralysing sadness. The following letter will illustrate this, and also pleasingly shew the bond which still subsisted between him and some of those with whom he had enjoyed sweet Christian fellowship, while he was at home:—

"*Bombay*, 1852.—My Dear Friends,—Many thanks for your double communication, doubly expressing your one heart and affection. It delights me to think of the 'rest and the inheritance' you have in a good measure obtained, even in your present dwelling. Happy in the knowledge and assurance of the Divine love, happy in each other, happy in your children, happy in your flock—you have 'a goodly heritage.' The Lord sometimes 'gave the land rest

considered, what hope is there that such a feeble prop can prevent its fall? But, as in the case of one who is labouring under a complication of diseases, and who evidently must soon die, we continue even unto death to administer medicines, even so do I minister to the decaying system of Hinduism. *Hinduism is sick unto death; I am fully persuaded that it must perish.* Still, while life remains, let us minister to it as we best can. I have written this book, hoping that it may prove a useful medicine; and if it be so fated, then possibly the patient may even yet recover."

forty years.' May He give you a long rest too, as long as your good and His glory will admit. And if your rest here is oft so sweet, what will it be yonder? Before that rest, this fades away and loses its very name. The Lord by and with Joshua gives us no rest. By and with the better Joshua he will. 'They rest from their labours, and their works follow them.' 'The righteous God will recompense rest to us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed;' we shall go no more out, we shall be 'ever with the Lord.' You allude to a memento of the sweet, though solemn truth, 'this is not your rest.' One of your best and dearest friends has been taken from you; and with many others, she beckons you to the skies. The facts you mention with regard to the last communion season is very encouraging. How seldom does the 'good Lord' call us to the last journey without special provision for the way! 'Rise and eat,' he says; 'once, yea twice, for the journey is too long for thee.' But with that provision it is easy and short. O may we all have that, the true viaticum! The apostate church knows the need of it, and tries to promote it. We know, too, and our Lord knows. That High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, does not let us want, and fills us with overflowing fulness when our wants are greatest. . . . . Two other girls have been baptized since ——'s admission into the church, and I expect the admission of a third at no distant day. The Lord often uses conversions to convert. . . . I look to your dear children, both to my own baptized one and his brother, with much interest and affection. O that my prayers for them may correspond with these feelings. I will keep you in mind on Saturday evenings. You do the same by us. Individually I much need your prayers. My sensitive temperament is much subject to depression, and Satan would like to disable me by means of this infirmity. But I

confide in Him who came to destroy his works; and, I trust, he will find his efforts worse than vain. His wrath will praise my Deliverer, and Strength, and Salvation; and what I cannot bear of that wrath, He will keep back. With affectionate regards to all your congenial associates, I am, yours, with much love in the Lord."

And again :—

"I am still a frequent sufferer from the old cause; but I bear my sufferings better, I think. I have more deliverances to look back to, and can more easily trust in the Lord. Did I give you the text that stayed me most in worst extremes? 'Jehovah liveth; and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted!'"

The necessities of the important station of Poona were still overwhelming. We have already had occasion to speak of some of the peculiar features of the work in this place. By this time many changes had occurred, which rendered it very different from the Poona in which Mr Nesbit had laboured. In particular, important reforms had been introduced into the Government College formerly alluded to, since the year 1837, in which Captain (now Major) Candy became superintendent; the Government English School had also been united with it, and the whole institution remodelled. The strength of old Brahmanical superstition had, for this and other reasons, been ebbing for a considerable time; but there had come in its place a devastating flood of infidelity.

Happily, an additional labourer had now been appointed to Poona, though he had not yet arrived. Mr Nesbit writes to Dr Tweedie :—

"3*d July* 1852.—Infidelity appears to be much more rampant among the educated young men at Poona, than it is among those of the same class in Bombay; it appears

even under the form of Atheism. Here, the Missionary Institutions, taken together, teach a larger number than the Government Institution. Our frequent lectures illustrative of the nature and evidence of Christianity, our many Bible and kindred classes, and our extensive intercourse with the rising youth of the Presidency, are believed to keep infidelity in check, or rather to diffuse a leaven of religious sobriety and respectfulness throughout the mass. But a solitary European labourer contends in Poona with fearful odds against him.

"Your appointment of a permanent additional labourer to that station has greatly rejoiced our hearts. Mr W. Kinnaird Mitchell is, I think, just the man we want. Our dear brother, Mr James Mitchell, must have peculiar delight and satisfaction in having a son to labour with him in the gospel."

In the month of January 1853, Mr Nesbit took a short tour in the Southern Konkan, mostly in the very localities with which he had been familiar four and twenty years before. The general inferences which he draws from a review of the journey are eminently worthy of attention:—

"In reviewing my experience on this tour, and comparing it with that of former years, I have much satisfaction in bearing witness to a great increase of knowledge on the subject of Christianity. This appears especially in the large towns and their immediate neighbourhood. The preaching of the Scottish missionaries, and their schools, laid the foundation of this knowledge; and missionary tours since, and the visits of colporteurs disposing of tracts, have added to it ten-fold. Men now converse together of Christ; and, although they speak reproachfully of His death, they know its alleged object—to take away sin. The plan is 'foolishness' to them at present, but a sense of sin

would transform it at once into wisdom. O that the Spirit would accomplish in them this His first work,—convincing them of sin! Without His mighty power, knowledge will increase indefinitely, and no blessed results appear. There is already a sad and disheartening disproportion between the degree and extent to which Christianity is known as a system, and the degree and extent to which it is felt as a power. On this point our enemies still laugh us to scorn. We are 'exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.'

"There appear to be three classes in which unconverted men present themselves as hearers of the gospel. *First*, Men generally hear it with joy; *Second*, Feeling, or even seeing at a distance, its practical consequences, they energetically, and often bitterly oppose it; *Third*, They sink or smooth down into a calmer mood, only roused occasionally by manifestations of the reality and vigour of the power they despise. I found several instances of the first class; and then, of course, the preaching of the gospel is most delightful. But I found more of the second; and there only the consciousness of glorifying God, and setting forth his truth, can fully sustain the mind. And, in regard to the third, instances are as yet hardly to be found on this side of India. In Bengal to some extent, and in the Madras Presidency to a much greater, the calm and almost acquiescent state of mind meets the message of the missionary. 'Faith cometh by hearing,' and hearing is not unwillingly granted.

"It would seem, indeed, as if the disposition to receive the gospel were in proportion to the time during which it has been presented to the mind, and the pains taken to present it. The Madras Presidency has been evangelised for 150

years, Bengal for 50, and Bombay for 30.* The fact is encouraging. The past illumines the future. Although God is sovereign, He generally observes modes of action that even we can trace; and now, He appears distinctly to say to us,—I have not failed you as to the little you have already done; do not fear that I shall fail you as to what, in dependence on my grace, and in zeal for my glory, you may yet do.

"It will be observed how Romanism has furnished objections to the enemies of the truth. 'You worship material things (the cross, &c.); you eat Christ's flesh, &c.,' are weapons against the gospel provided by its professed friends. I was even told the other day, when speaking of the offerings to the manes among the Hindus, that we had our manes and offerings too,—'Else,' said the objector, 'what is purgatory?'

"It will also be observed how deeply the mind of the people is imbued with impious and immoral principles. That they themselves are God, and that only fools make a difference between right and wrong—are sentiments that descend to the lowest members of the Hindu community. One is apt to think that atheistic ideas of such transcendentalism would be inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of idolatry. Can such high speculatists be base idolaters? Can one that believes himself divine, worship any object whatever? Can he worship a snake or a stone? Can one, that believes that there is no difference between right and wrong, believe, at the same time, that merit and demerit govern the universe? Can they consume time and wealth and health and comfort in many grievous and disgusting

* In round numbers.—Carey arrived in Bengal in 1793; Kiernander, however, in 1758. We have spoken of the commencement of Missions in Bombay in chapter iii.

atonements? They can. Outrageous belief on one point prepares the mind for outrageous belief on another; and the philosophy that rises proudly to heaven to insult God on His throne, will, the next moment, be the idolatry that basely bows before the meanest of His creatures. It matters not how inconsistent the beliefs are with each other. Dreamy thought leads in one direction; the stern necessities involved in the desires, the affections, and the conscience, lead in another; and the results of both find a lodgement in the same mind. And the mind that can entertain ideas that are glaringly opposite to truth, can also entertain ideas that are glaringly opposite to each other. Every intellectual and moral process is indeed perverted and enfeebled; and nothing is more distressing, nothing more powerfully brings despair, to one who seeks India's weal, than the utter *laxity* of mind that marks her sons,—a mental condition in which established truth of any kind is unrecognised, and a single fixed point is a thing that cannot be found,—a moving quagmire of which you cannot predict the position for an hour, because you do not know how the wind will blow, and on which you cannot plant a foot, or set one stone upon another, because it swallows everything, and sustains nothing.

"But there is comfort for this distress: there is hope for this despair. This world was once a chaos. It was formless and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. But the Spirit of God brought order out of confusion, and 'commanded the light to shine out of darkness.' And so it will be again. The Hindu mind will be endued with certain, established principles; it will gather consistency; it will gain strength; it will put on beauty as a garment; it will stand forth, the unmistakable workmanship of a divine hand."

In the course of this year, a case of baptism occurred in connection with another Mission in Bombay, which led to a mode of attack on the part of the Heathen, which Mr Nesbit states he had never witnessed before. It exhibits an exceedingly interesting phase of Native sentiment.

"Two or three months ago, the attendance at my morning class was a good deal checked by the baptism of a young man who had long and largely availed himself of all the means of grace in Bombay, and who had not neglected those afforded at my house. Being of high caste and respectable family, his baptism excited a great sensation in the city; and those who had formerly expressed the greatest fearlessness in investigating truth, hid themselves for a time, either in alarm for themselves, or in regard to trembling relatives. Who will fall next? was the question that blind nature, and blinder superstition suggested, and which they were terrified to answer.

"In the Native newspapers, the new convert was charged with gross ignorance of Christianity itself, as well as of the objections to Christianity; and vices, never whispered before, were immediately proclaimed as the distinction and disgrace of his character.* It is very interesting to observe how the charges are levelled against him. His character and conduct are taken up and set side by side with the doctrines and precepts of Christ; and the question is put, Is that man a Christian? Perhaps the writer was not aware that he was proclaiming Christ, though out of envy and strife, yet to the glory of His name and the honour of His gospel.

"This is a species of attack on the progress of religion, which, as far as I know, is in this quarter new. The writer

* There was reason to fear that some of these charges were not entirely groundless.

spares neither the convert, nor the instruments of his conversion; yet highly honours the system to which he professes to be turned. Drunkenness, epicurism, cheating, falsehood, reviling, anger, and violence, are all put to the charge of the one; and injustice in seeking the convert's wife by means of a writ of *habeas corpus*, is laid to the charge of the other. But these all appear in contrast with Christianity itself, and with the alleged work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.

"What a call this is to us, and to our converts, to exhibit that religion with which the natives are now learning to compare us; and what a call on you to pray for us, that we may not dishonour or misrepresent its holy Author in the prominent and awful position that we hold!"

This year the Mission sustained a heavy trial in the death of one of the more advanced Native Christians, Bala Gopal, a convert from Brahmanism, whose name has been already mentioned. He was near the end of his studies in the Medical College of Bombay, under the auspices of that most valuable institution, the Medical Missionary Society of Edinburgh —his desire being to become himself a *Medical Missionary*. Many hopes had clustered around this interesting youth; but, in the all-wise providence of God, these hopes were blighted. This was the first instance in which any of the better-educated converts had been taken away; and the affliction was, therefore, the more severe. Moreover, the positive loss to the Mission agency was exceedingly great: for who could take his place? It necessarily remained a melancholy blank. Mr Nesbit refers with much feeling to dear Bala. He writes to the Secretary of the Medical Missionary Society:—

"Bala's dying experience was very satisfactory and consoling. His disease affected the brain; and hence there

was little of continued thought or utterance. But all he did utter, either in answer to us, or in prayer to God, shewed very distinctly where all his hopes centred and reposed.

"'You do not fear to die, Bala,' said Mr Murray Mitchell. 'No,' he replied. 'Why no fear?' 'Because I trust in Christ and His righteousness.' On another occasion I said, 'I trust, dear Bala, you can say, O death, where is thy sting?' He did not allow me to finish the sentence. He took it up with vigour himself, 'O grave, where is thy victory?'

"We thought—and you were kindly and generously willing to help us in carrying out the thought—we thought to have fitted and furnished dear Bala for much usefulness on earth. But we were doing little else than preparing him for glory in heaven. He thanked you most cordially for all your kindness to him; and I now re-echo his thanks, all the more grateful that they are those of one who has finished his course, and kept the faith, and won the crown.

"His removal is a great grief and loss to us. But our loss is his gain. And we know not how much good he may have done, or prepared for being done, while he was with us. His consistent walk and conversation did good; and his calmness and joy at the prospect of death, entertained on the most Scriptural grounds, did more good still. May his removal be blessed!"

We may add to Mr Nesbit's touching remarks, that all the members of the Mission strove to minister, as they could, to their young friend. Dr Wilson, and the native brethren, all and each, sought to smooth his dying pillow, and whisper words of peace. Nor only the members of the Free Church Mission. The scene around his bed was a most affecting one. Christians from all the Missions in Bombay

were there, men and women—for Bala was greatly loved —and many were shedding tears of mingled grief and joy at witnessing his peaceful end.

Such breaches in a Mission awaken the keenest emotions. We may quote the following note, written at the time by one who had a peculiar love to Bala, as exhibiting the feeling with which the members of the Mission "carried to his burial, and made great lamentation over" this young brother, so unexpectedly removed:—

". . . There was assembled in that solemn chamber a little company of Christians of many different 'tongues, and kindreds, and peoples,'—English, American, German, Parsi, Afghan, Sindian, and Hindu. They all united together in prayer; and while their supplications were rising to the mercy-seat, the spirit gently passed, and went to its joy and its rest. The next morning the mortal part was laid in its narrow bed, to await the time to put on its immortality. The scene at the funeral was deeply touching. All assembled in the Free Church. Many friends attended, European and Native—many heathen also, and some of dear Bala's Professors, and nearly all his fellow-students. The school-girls were in the church, with Mrs Jones and Maina; but they did not go to the burying-ground. Mr M. went into the pulpit, while the coffin was laid on a table below, and gave an address, solemn and full of the deep emotion which filled his own heart. He prayed and read appropriate portions of Scripture. He then headed the procession; and the precious body was borne by all the converts of our own Mission. At the grave our dear brother Narayan gave an impressive address in Marathi; and then, as in the church, not a dry eye was there in the assemblage. O may this much lamented death be life, life eternal, to many heathens who were there!

"The evening after, one of the Parsi students of the Medical College said to Mr M., 'Bala Gopal died in peace.' —'Yes,' Mr M. replied,—'do you know whence that peace was derived?'—'Yes; it was from his belief in Christ. He died happy,—we all saw that; and he told us it was because he was going to Christ.'" . . .

It is a most blessed thing when the Native Christians of India are thus, by their example, in life and in death, an evidence of the truth of the Gospel. And here we may remark—though it is a point not immediately connected with what has now been before us—that there is perhaps nothing that more arrests the attention and carries the conviction of the heathen, than the spectacle of well-ordered Christian households. There is so sad a wreck of domestic ties among themselves, that the sight of a Native family in which the law of Christ—the law of love—reigns supreme, is as startling from its novelty as touching in its beauty. Such households had by this time begun to spring up in the Missions of Western India.

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL ENGAGEMENTS—BAPTISMS—DEATH OF A NATIVE FEMALE—MR NESBIT'S MARRIAGE—INQUIRERS—REVISION OF MARATHI TESTAMENT —DEATH.

Towards the close of 1853, the Rev. James Mitchell of Poona was compelled, after thirty years of faithful and zealous service in India, to seek recruited health in Europe. It was deemed necessary that one of the missionaries at Bombay should take his place; and Mr M. Mitchell proceeded to Poona at the end of the year. Mr Nesbit was then going out on a short missionary tour, and accompanied him several stages on the way. They visited the hill of Matheran, to see whether a Mission school could be established there, the place promising to become a large and important Sanitarium.* Mr Nesbit hoped by this tour, in addition to his own delightful work of preaching in the villages, to lay up a measure of strength for the additional work which would come upon him. Even already his health was somewhat unsteady.

Soon after his return from the tour, we find one of his native brethren intreating him not to attempt working, as he was then doing, for sixteen or seventeen hours a-day. To a minister in Scotland who had requested him to give friends at home an account of "one of his Indian days," he thus supplies the sketch required :—

* In a village at the foot of this hill was born the man who has attained so infamous a notoriety, Náná Sáheb.

"You want an account of one of my Indian days. I will give you one of the most crowded ones in the month, the first Monday. Rise a little before six, when there is always a little daylight. Bathe, dress, private worship; get into a one-horse conveyance, and drive to the Missionary Conference, so as to be there at a quarter past seven. Converse with brethren of all denominations; join with them in singing, reading, sometimes commenting, and praying three times. Unite in discussion of missionary difficulties till breakfast, and family worship. Return home; set off to the Institution, so as to be there at eleven. Teach the highest Bible class of the School division. Teach the Bible class of the College division at twelve. Teach Cowper, Milton, or some other classic, for one hour; and some such book as Butler's Analogy for another. Return home at three; prepare for exercises at five and seven; dine at four. Teach the girls of the Boarding-school at five. Return home; take tea. Go to the United Missionary Prayer meeting at seven. Return home between eight and nine; prepare the lessons of the following day; write a pressing letter or note; private worship; retire to rest.

"The Sabbath preceding:—Rise, &c., as before. At seven, teach a Bible class of young natives that understand English,—gentlemen's sons, clerks in offices, pupils in other institutions, as well as our own, &c. At half-past eight, instruct and pray with my own servants and others, in Marathi. Breakfast a little after nine. Preach somewhere in English at eleven. Preach in turn, in Marathi, at two. Address the natives in Marathi at five, at the Poor's Asylum or at the Jail. Attend Free Church at six. Return home, and take tea. Teach a domestic Bible class, with worship, between nine and ten. Private reading and worship; retire to rest at eleven. Sometimes preach in the

Free Church; which modifies the above, but leaves its main features the same."

Soon after the middle of 1854, one of the most advanced students of the Institution, Baba Pudmonjee, was received into the church of Christ. His case was deeply interesting; and Mr Nesbit dwells on it at considerable length. He notices, as a striking fact, "that although Baba had suffered greatly from his own relatives, the native community had in no way assailed his character."

"His native friends shewed nothing but respect. His character was so high before his baptism that they dare not touch it now. Indeed, the native newspapers hold either a respectful silence, or give a respectful notice. Eminent in talent and attainments, Baba is equally distinguished by a decided Christian experience."

The following note to this young disciple, written immediately after his baptism, will shew the kind of intercourse which Mr Nesbit held with those who stood in a position of such tender and solemn interest:—

"*Bombay, Sept.* 1854.—My Dear B.—We give unceasing thanks to God for all His goodness to you. I have read most of your letters with great interest and pleasure; but the one that gave me most delight was that in which, previous to your baptism, you spoke of your delighting in God, meditating on Him in the night watches, and holding sweet and satisfying communion with Him. Your experience and David's is the same, (Psalm lxiii. 5–8). I always wish for young converts such experiences of holy joy. They are to them not only the shortest and surest proof of Christianity; but they make them miserable afterwards, when they go astray in sin or in carelessness, and lose their sense of the Divine presence. I bless God for the guiding light you have had. May you ever remember your privileges, and

strive to attain to the height of them. You have 'glorified God and enjoyed Him' in the most sensible manner; you may again and again. Let your soul still 'follow hard after Him, and His right hand will uphold you.'

"We rejoice much in the prospect you have of being joined by your wife.* May she be yours in a higher sense than the world understands. And may you 'live together as co-heirs of the grace of life.' Your house will then be an ante-chamber to heaven. We also rejoice greatly in the prospect of seeing you soon among us, and among your old friends. I think they already feel your baptism as a call to serious inquiry. We will, when you come, form together plans of usefulness, which may God enable us to follow out. You know we much need Christian teachers and preachers. May you be a blessed addition to the number we now have. Yours in much Christian affection."

A short time afterwards he writes:—

"The conversion and baptism of Baba Pudmonjee has had, I think, a quickening influence on the natives in this city and elsewhere. Happily, Parsis are coming forward, as well as other natives. If that section of the inhabitants of Western India were, to a considerable extent, converted, they would, through divine grace, exert a mighty influence on the whole population."

In the month of October we find Mr Nesbit rejoicing in the arrival of his valued friend, the Rev. T. G. Clark, to be minister of the Free Church European congregation. Since the resignation of the Rev. A. G. Fraser, two years before, the duty of conducting the public services had devolved on the missionaries, and had occupied a portion of the strength

* A hope, alas! not fulfilled. The rending of affection is one of the severest trials to which converts are exposed; and this young man has had full experience of the pang.

and time which they desired to devote wholly to the work among the Natives.

In the same letter (written to Dr Tweedie) he thus refers to an important event, the ordination of the Rev. Narayan Sheshadri to the office of the holy ministry. He was the third Native ordained in connection with the Mission —the Rev. Dhanjibhai Nauroji having been ordained in Scotland in 1846, and the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji at Bombay in 1848 (while Mr Nesbit was in Europe):—

"Another most important service took place on the 11th October. Mr Narayan Sheshadri was, in accordance with the sanction given by the Church at home, solemnly set apart to the office of the holy ministry.

"The place of meeting, Ambroli, was crowded to excess. All conducted themselves with the utmost decorum; and, after the service, many of the heathen youth came forward, and cordially shook hands with one whom they cannot regard but as a friend. The young minister will, I trust, prove like Timothy, 'a diligent follower' of the brightest and best of all human patterns of ministration."

Our readers are aware that many of the pupils of our Missionary Institutions, who are thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christianity, and to some extent impressed by its disclosures and claims, yet are not able to "come out and be separate," counting "all things but loss" for Christ. In what state do such men die? In a note to Dr Wilson, Mr Nesbit refers briefly to one of these victims of procrastination. The young man, we may remark, was quiet and undemonstrative; and his teachers would have selected several of his class-fellows as nearer to the kingdom of heaven.

"I have seen L. B. He is, I presume, very far gone in consumption. He wants to see you. He very decidedly expresses his faith in Christ; and, poor boy, he has a great

desire to have us all present at his death, that we may prevent his being burned, and may get him buried. I told him of the safety of both soul and body, if he cast himself upon Christ."

Very unlike this troubled departure was the peaceful death of a young female, an inmate of the Boarding-School:—

"By some means or other Luxumee had been appropriated in her childhood by a bad woman in Bombay, and was being brought up for the worst of purposes. But you know that while there is a prejudice (I hope I may almost write there *was* a prejudice) among the natives against the education of respectable females, it was always counted proper and profitable that other females should be possessed of learning. Luxumee was, therefore, sent to school, that she might become learned, and by learning attractive, and cunning, and powerful. But, while such was the wicked purpose of her human friend or enemy, the Divine purpose was very different. The dear little girl got something better than mere learning. One or two of the other girls of the school had abandoned Hinduism, and were living with Mr and Mrs M. Mitchell. She had seen their altered and happy state, and she ran away from her vile protectress, and joined them. She was laid hold of, however, and taken back to the home she had forsaken. She was an unwilling captive, and sought an opportunity of escape; and well do I remember the day, when all breathless and trembling with fear, she came running into my house. A recapture was not attempted, and she lived safe and happy with the other dependants of the mission. She was ever exemplary as a pupil and inmate of the boarding establishment. In 1848, a year or two after she joined us, she was baptized; and the profession she made she did not fail to adorn. She was eminently

distinguished by 'a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.' She was, at the same time, very useful in the school, and much loved by the superintendent.

"The Hindus believe that a female dying unmarried revisits, as a ghost, the scenes of her earthly residence, and laments a life that began and ended in vain. At the funeral service I referred to this belief, and pointed out to the many natives, both Christian and heathen, that assembled in the mission-house, the absurdity of such a belief in the case of the departed. Shortly before her death she had said, 'Read to me the 7th of Revelation;' and now she was enjoying what she then delighted to contemplate. We should send her no rice and water, as the poor natives did regularly to their deceased relatives; for, according to her chosen chapter, she 'hungered no more, nor thirsted any more; the sun did not light' on her, nor any heat; but the Lamb who was in the midst of the throne fed her, and led her to living fountains of water, and God had wiped away all tears from her eyes.

"She was naturally very reserved, and, during her illness, which was a rapid consumption, she said but little to man; but her prayer was unto God, and all her confidence, as she assured us, rested on His blessed Son. She was a sweet unmurmuring sufferer, and shewed by her patience and her peace, how much God had done and was doing for her soul."

The year 1855 opened with the most gladdening prospects—prospects of renewed domestic happiness, and of extended usefulness. He was able to write on the 2d of January, in reference to his approaching marriage:—

"'What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits

towards me?' People are saying to each other, 'I wish you a happy new year;' but 'the Father of Mercies' is Himself effectually saying it to me."

To her whom he expected soon to join him in India, he thus writes:—

"The Lord will be in your new home. It will be indeed a Bethel, where we shall both worship and enjoy the presence of the God of Jacob, where we shall see heaven better, climb the ladder with greater promptitude, and have more than ever our conversation in the heavens."

We find him very much occupied, about this time, with the cases of some young men, who, amidst manifold trials, were enabled to profess their faith in the Son of God. The following letter, written to Dr Wilson, then on a visit to Surat, will shew something of the trying scenes through which converts generally have to pass:—

"Yesterday, one of our pupils in the first class of the school division came to my house asking my protection. He has long been grieved by his mother forcing him to adorn the household idol; and, yesterday, he was denied his food, because he positively refused obedience. He came to school fasting, but quietly came here as to his home, with Baba and Ramchundra. I questioned him with great care, and could not refuse his request.

"He has been a serious boy for two years, well known to Baba, Narayan, Ramchundra, and others. He had written to me a most sensible Marathi letter on Saturday, and I was prepared for his coming. His mother, brother, and uncle reasoned with him three successive hours, last night; and for the same period again this morning; but he is unmoved. The mother's screams last night were enough to rend any heart, but they did not change his purpose.

"To-day they would have kept him for ever in front of

my house, waiting for an opportunity to carry him off. I therefore took him in at nine. A great disturbance accompanied and followed the movement, and we had reason to fear an assault. . . . . I wrote to the authorities for protection, and it has been given through the constable of the district."

This boy was afterwards carried off when on his way to school, and kept in confinement; but his prison was discovered, and the relatives in alarm set him free. Mr Nesbit mentions, that young men in the Institution, though heathen themselves, had been the means of discovering his place of confinement and restoring him to freedom. The following fact he notices as a remarkable, but somewhat exceptional case. It refers to the same youth:—

"Lately K. has visited his relations at their own home. His brother's affections seem to be a good deal alienated from him. But the mother is the mother still; and while she weeps bitterly over her son, she embraces him in love, and fondly feeds him with her own hand. The feelings of nature are thus seen prevailing over those of a false religion, especially those concentrated in caste; and one abhorred and put away by the Hindu, is still loved and clung to by the relation. This presents, we trust, the first streaks on the horizon of the dawn of a better day for India. Her unnatural barriers between man and man, and her unnatural means of cementing kinsman to kinsman, are being broken down and abolished; and that gospel which so harmonises with all the original principles of our nature finds less opposition, has freer course, and is more glorified."

Of another young man, a good deal farther advanced in his studies, he writes to Dr Tweedie:—

"On the Sabbath preceding K.'s baptism I was waited on by another pupil of our Institution. He came to my morn-

ing Bible class, and remained to speak with me at its close. I was not surprised when he told me that he desired 'to come out and be separate.' It had been evident to all the missionaries that he had been convinced of the falsity of Hinduism, and of the truth of Christianity, for two or three years past; and all his essays and other productions had always betrayed Christian sentiment and feeling. His spirit and conduct, too, had plainly been modified by Christian belief. It was, therefore, with less surprise than pleasure that I listened to his announcement. I believed it to be the result of much and long thought, many conflicting feelings, and many rising and falling purposes. After questioning, and speaking, and praying with him, I united with one of our best and most tried native converts in advising him to return home, that he might try whether he could live as a Christian in his father's house. The experiment was almost hopeless; but it was well to prove its hopelessness both to him and to ourselves. He therefore remained at home on Sabbath and Monday. On Tuesday morning he wrote to me a long letter stating his difficulties. Under the circumstances described in the letter, dear G. evidently needed the help that a Christian home could alone afford; and to this effect I wrote to him in reply. When the school dismissed in the afternoon, he came with two school-fellows. So well aware was he of the trial which awaited him, that he asked me whether he might not refuse for a time to see those relations who might come to claim him. I told him I thought he ought to see them; and endeavoured, under God, to strengthen him for the interview. Two brothers and a friend came about nine at night, and used every argument and inducement to win him back to his home. But he was supported under the severe trial,—we trust, from on high. After midnight an uncle and other relatives came

demanding an interview. His father and they had been 'weeping and fasting,' and wished him home to end their sorrows. At that unseasonable hour he told them he could not see them, but requested them to come back in the morning.

"The morning and the meeting came. It lasted long, and was very severe. When it had reached a certain stage, he came to me in an adjoining room, saying, 'The devil is working hard against me, and I cannot bear it any longer.' I then told the relatives that G. did not wish to speak more with them on that occasion, nor to accede to their request. They so pertinaciously demanded another interview, however, that it was given them. On this occasion G. plainly told them that he was afraid that natural affection would lead him to do what he knew to be wrong, and would rob him of his salvation. This admission only made the applicants the more ardent in pressing their request. But their increased pressure only made him draw back with the stronger and calmer determination. Since that time he has been visited every day by brothers and friends; but has continued firm in his purpose to cleave to Christ.

"He is the first of his caste that has made such a movement towards Christianity; and it is not matter of surprise that there should be much abuse and threatening in certain native quarters. But there is a knowledge among the natives generally that legal interposition is useless, and a conviction that violence is also a hopeless remedy. In addition to this, there seems a feebleness of purpose among them to resist the power of Christian education by other competent means. With their eyes open they let their children go to Christian schools, even when their neighbours' children are seen leaving their homes and their household gods.

"May 'the good Lord' more and more advance His blessed

cause, and 'keep by His mighty power through faith unto salvation,' those who have shewn a desire to 'keep themselves from idols.'"

On the 3d of March Mr Nesbit was married to Miss Marion Marshall, eldest daughter of Claude Marshall, Esq. of Greenock, who, accompanied by her sister, had arrived from England on the 25th February. This event was an occasion of much joy and thankfulness to all his friends. The sinking and loneliness of heart to which reference has once and again been made, was thus removed; and he had graciously accorded to him that domestic happiness for which he was fitted, perhaps as much as any man ever was. She to whom he was united was also in every way qualified to encourage and assist in his great work as a missionary.

Very soon afterwards, Mr and Mrs Nesbit took under their direct superintendence the important Institution to which reference has frequently been made—the Female Boarding School. Mrs Seitz had been compelled, by failing health, to dissolve her connection with it about fifteen months before, since which time it had been chiefly under the care of Maina (formerly referred to), now the wife of Mr Vincente A. de Cunha.

The annual meeting of the General Assembly in Edinburgh, was an event in which Mr Nesbit always took the deepest interest; and earnest were his supplications that it might be a holy convocation, presided over by the great Master of Assemblies. The following extract from a letter to a minister in Scotland touches on this subject:—

"*Bombay, May* 19. 1853.—This is the day your great Assembly meets. We had a church prayer meeting for you last night, and we have been remembering you in our

houses this morning. May 'the good Lord' support and bless you individually, and all your brethren with you.

"We expect that Dr Duff will be able to report 'great things' for India. We have been privileged to report to you greater things than ever of India. May you and your work here 'abound more and more.' I have great hopes that the next thirty years (we have been engaged [in Western India] only about that time) will witness a progress a thousandfold greater than the past. Probably, by that time, idolatry will be abolished. And what a satisfaction that will be! Oh, to see all the gods crushed to powder, or burned to ashes, or melted and gone! And more still, to see the sacred animals reduced to their place; man alone acknowledged as created in the image of God, and God alone adored and worshipped!"

The hope expressed in the latter part of the above, is somewhat remarkable. That idolatry will "probably" be abolished in India within thirty years, could hardly have been a settled anticipation,—especially since Mr Nesbit's was a mind not generally sanguine, nor disposed to draw flattering pictures of the future, but accustomed rather to derive its support from a profound sense of duty, and a simple reliance upon God. The opinion, however, is worth recording, as it shews how much more rapid the visible advance of Christianity must, by this time, have become. It clearly proves—what the reader must have already gathered from the language he not unfrequently employs—that Mr Nesbit was now much less depressed in regard to the progress of missionary work than he had been in former days. Conversions were more numerous, and were multiplying from year to year; and the impression on the mass around seemed at once wider and deeper.

The new building to accommodate the Free General As-

sembly's Institution had been by this time completed, and it was opened in April of this year. The Mission was under much obligation to members of their "Financial Board," who had diligently watched over the progress of the building. Though entirely devoid of ornament, it was sufficiently large and commodious,—capable of accommodating, if needful, nearly eight hundred pupils. We can conceive the gratitude and hopefulness with which Mr Nesbit commenced his labours within it. But how seldom was he to enter the structure for the raising of which he had so strenuously exerted himself!

From February to July, Mr Nesbit, in addition to his other duties, was much occupied in an important work—the revision of the Marathi New Testament. A new edition was about to be published in connection with the Jubilee of the Bible Society; and the greatest pains were taken to render the version as perfect as possible. A Committee was formed, consisting of Missionaries, European and Native, of the English, Scotch (Free Church), and American Missions; and in union with the other members of this Committee, or by himself in preparation for its discussions, Mr Nesbit devoted five or six hours daily to this work. The Committee met nearly every day. As this superadded labour must evidently exhaust his strength, relatives and friends earnestly exhorted him to lay aside for the present an evening Bible class. But he would not consent;—"I cannot do that," he said, gently but firmly. He himself habitually fed on the divine word, as of him it might be said emphatically, "his lips fed many." His engagements at the Institution, too, were kept up with anxious regularity. He would not allow that he was overworked, or, at least, pleaded the special exigency, and the temporary character, of the labour that particularly tried his strength—that of the revision above

referred to. His spirit was now buoyant and happy; and he gave thanks because of increasing power to serve his blessed Master. The clouds that had too often overshadowed his soul were all dispelled; and the sun, still seemingly far from setting, now shone brightly forth. All around him thought—and apparently he thought himself—that he had still much work to do in his chosen sphere. But oh how vain are human hopes! His sun went down while it was yet day. His work was done; and suddenly he was summoned home.

With regard to the circumstances of his death, far better than any words of ours, will be the simple but affecting narrative of her who tenderly ministered by his dying couch:—

"During the rainy months of June and July, Mr Nesbit had been unusually well; but on Thursday the 26th, he complained of cold and slight diarrhœa. Having taken some medicine, he went to the Institution as usual, and continued there until five o'clock afternoon. Returning home at that hour, he did not feel well enough to join the family at dinner. No alarm, however, was felt, either by himself or his wife, though the complaint continued during the evening, and he allayed any rising fears by saying, that he was subject to such attacks during the rains, and that this would soon go off. He, however, yielded to repeated requests before retiring for the night, and took some medicine. Cramp came on about midnight, and then for the first time the awful fact that cholera had seized the precious sufferer was forced upon the mind. His most kind physician came at once on being sent for, and every means were used that skill and affection could devise to stay the progress of the disease; but it was irresistible. After a few hours of severe bodily suffering, the spirit took its flight to be 'for ever with the Lord.' There was no time for parting words

or parting counsels, and she who needed them most was too much bewildered either to give the beloved one comfort, or ask it for him, or from him. Once she said to him in agony, 'O pray that the Lord would spare your life,' and he answered, 'I am doing so, my love.' Expressions of endearment broke from his lips; and his mind, in the midst of all the bodily distress, seemed to turn to the desolation in which his removal would leave her who had but lately left home and friends for him. 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord—' (Numbers vi. 24, 25, 26), was all his faltering voice could utter of the prayers and thoughts which were passing within; but in a little while, making a fresh effort, he faintly whispered, 'You'll not lament coming here.' That the Lord was with him, and sustaining his soul, while his body tossed from side to side in agony, none could doubt. The tone of voice with which he answered 'O yes,' to his wife's inquiry if his mind were kept in peace, conveyed to her the blessed assurance that the enemy was kept at a distance. Very shortly before his death, as Dr Wilson in concluding his supplications prayed, 'that when heart and flesh fainted and failed, God might be the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever,' he said with solemn emphasis, 'the Lord will.' These few words are all of deathbed sayings we have to relate. In his case there was no need for deathbed preparation. Just two Sabbaths before, he had said to a native convert, in greeting her at the close of the service, 'A——, you should not need a deathbed preparation; you should be always prepared.' His last words to the girls of the native female boarding-school on the Tuesday before he died, and while in perfect health, were singularly appropriate as a farewell exhortation to them also. He was going over, in his weekly meeting with them, the Gospel of John, and had on that evening reached the

fifty-second verse of the eighth chapter. 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death,' were the words most dwelt upon. He set forth to them in simple but impressive language, that the present was but our little life—the life to come the great one,—and that to the possessors of eternal life through Christ, the loss of the little life was of small moment. He urged upon them all with the persuasive earnestness of his usual manner, not to go about satisfied with only one life,—for then they would always be afraid of death, which would take from them their only life,—but to seek for the other great life; and then no danger would make them afraid.

"The tidings of his illness spread rapidly; and many friends, European and Native, crowded to his house. A party of the latter, in an adjoining room to that in which he lay, lifted up their voices in earnest supplication that the Lord would yet spare their beloved teacher. The eldest, a Christian of sixteen years standing, and an ordained minister of the gospel, commenced the prayers, while they were closed by a young disciple who had only a few months before taken up the cross. But his work was done on earth, and the Lord had need that His servant should now 'be with Him where He was.' At half-past ten on the morning of the 27th, his spirit departed."

Dr Wilson had sent a message to Poona by the electric telegraph, to apprise us of the danger,—and when all was over he sent another; but with such fearful rapidity did the fatal disease do its work, that the two messages arrived together. The first intimation of danger was also an intimation of death! Rightly are such blows called stunning; for the mind remains for a time bewildered under them, and confused,—and awakens, only by degrees, to a full sense of the awful magnitude of its loss. "I was dumb with silence, I opened not my mouth; because *Thou* didst it."

The pang of such fearful separations acquires fresh poignancy from what is a necessity in India—speedy interment. Mr Nesbit died on the 27th; he was buried on the 28th. "His precious remains," as one of the Native ministers affectionately writes, "were taken to the Free Church Mission-house; where, at an early hour, a very large number both of Natives and Europeans had assembled. It was the largest funeral I have ever seen. Men of all classes and creeds were present. Not a few did I observe shedding tears." The Rev. T. G. Clark commenced the solemn services in English, and the Rev. H. Pestonji followed in Marathi, at the Mission-house; and again at the grave, there were English and Marathi services conducted by Messrs Clark and Narayan Sheshadri. On the Lord's day following, in the public exercises conducted in the Free Church congregation by Dr Wilson and Mr Clark, and in the Mission Chapel by Messrs Hormasdji and Narayan, full reference was made to the great affliction which weighed down every heart. All of these services were numerously attended by Natives as well as Europeans,—by Heathens as well as Christians. In Poona, Mr M. Mitchell took occasion, on the Lord's day, to refer to the sad bereavement. The European community of Poona is not large; but the Mission Chapel could not contain the numbers who came to testify their interest in him whom many had seen, and of whom all had heard. The grief of other missions, and Christians connected with other churches, was scarcely less deep than that of his own mission and the friends immediately associated with him. Ministers and Christians of all denominations sorrowed over his grave; and they who could not, by their presence, testify their sympathy, expressed it in writing. "I am greatly shocked," wrote a clergyman of the Church of England, "at the intelligence of Mr Nesbit's

sudden removal. Surely this will be a loss, long and severely felt, to the churches of Bombay." "I most truly sympathise with you," wrote a Baptist missionary," in the irreparable loss your Mission has sustained." Expressions of a similar kind continued to arrive from Christian friends and ministers throughout Western India.

The deep respect for Mr Nesbit which was expressed by the more enlightened portion of the native community, might, indeed, have been anticipated; but probably no one was prepared to find the feeling all but universal. The native papers nearly all referred to his death, and none did so without expressing much regret.*

A week after his death a number of his native friends, both Christian and heathen, met in the hall of the Free Church Institution, to consider how they could best perpetuate the memory of their honoured friend and benefactor. They resolved to raise a sum for the purpose of founding a scholarship, or scholarships, in connection with the Institution in which he had laboured so long and so successfully. Soon afterwards a meeting of Europeans was held for a similar purpose; and it was resolved to found a "Nesbit Theological Scholarship," to be held by a student for the holy ministry,—the surplus to be given to purchase his books for the Institution, with which the "Nesbit Library" thus would still further help to connect a hallowed name, which could not be brought too frequently into remembrance.

* Some of us had occasion to see Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, soon afterwards. After expressing his own deep sympathy with the Mission in the great loss it had sustained,—"I have been interested," said his Lordship, "I may say I have been surprised, at the terms of high regard in which the Native papers allude to him. It has to my mind shed a new light on the feelings of the Native community towards Christian missionaries."

The following letter gives utterance to another feeling which pervaded all hearts,—that of sympathy with her who had, with such fearful suddenness, undergone the sorest transition which woman can be called to bear. It is from the Kirk-Session of the Free Church European congregation to Mrs Nesbit:—

"*Session-House, Free Church, 31st July* 1855.

"DEAR MADAM,—Our hearts yearn to give expression to the feeling of sympathy with which we regard your sorrow. To weep with those who weep is always a duty,—how much more so in such a case as this, when the sorrower is the widow of one who has so won our love; one, much of whose happiness whilst amongst us was derived from rejoicing with those who rejoiced, and who, with equal alacrity, shared the burden of the afflicted; one whose large, unselfish, loving heart led him habitually to regard and treat as a brother every man with whom he came in contact, whatever his colour, his condition, his acquirements, or his character; one who has laid the congregation which we represent under lasting obligations by his faithful ministrations to it when its pastorate was vacant.

"We sorrow that we shall see again no more in the flesh that face whose expression was a moral sunshine, nor hear again those lips which dropped as an honeycomb, and that tongue whose law was kindness.

"Sad and sorrowful indeed was that hour when, only twenty short weeks after your union, you found yourself a widow; and sad was it to those friends who witnessed the last struggle of the dear departed. But there was another scene which, though the mortal eye could not penetrate, the word of God teaches us to realise. If the angels of heaven rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, what must have been the joy of those angels who conveyed that soul so ripe for glory to the

mansions prepared for it, and that soul which, when in the body, always rejoiced at the recognition of even the faintest lineaments, however imperfect, of the image of Christ! What must have been its transports when brought to see the King in His beauty! This event is one of the innumerable answers to the Saviour's prayer: 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' Our departed friend, some time ago, remarked to one of us, 'Christ's love to his people is such that He will not allow one of them to remain away from His immediate presence an hour longer than is necessary for His glory and the good of His church.' We, with our short sight, would have detained him here. Just united to a partner who would cheer, and comfort, and assist him in his labours of love, his prospect of usefulness seemed lengthened. But the eye of unerring wisdom saw not so. Be assured, dear Madam, that this dark dispensation has mercy in it, that it is one of the 'all things,' which, through all complexities, the Omniscient mind discerns to be working together 'for the good of them that love God.' Confusion there may seem to be; but in reality there is order, harmony, and beauty. From this dark cloud shall yet be showered down upon you rich blessings.

"May this solemn event have a due impression upon us all; may we lay to heart what our departed friend, while with us, taught not only directly, but more especially by his example; for therein we have seen what it is to be clothed with humility, and what to put on charity as a bond of perfectness.

"In yourself, dear Madam, as the widow of the Rev. Robert Nesbit, we desire to recognise one who has the strongest claim to our respectful Christian love and esteem, to our

deepest sympathy, and to our most fervent prayers. That the great and good Physician may tenderly bind up the wounds of his own hand; that the God of all grace and consolation may sustain and comfort you, and grant you that peace which passeth all understanding, is the prayer of your friends and brothers in Christ Jesus,

Thomas G. Clark, *Minister.*

Arthur D. Fallon, H. Miller, W. H. Bell, Wm. F. Hunter, W. W. Peyton, N. Spencer, *Elders.*

A simple monument marks his resting-place in the Scotch burying-ground. It was erected by one who had been an endeared friend of the deceased for twenty years. The added text was suggested as one which Mr Nesbit had often employed in his pleadings with the Church, as expressive of the grand object of all right missionary exertion. The inscription runs thus:—

HERE RESTS THE BODY OF THE

REV. ROBERT NESBIT,

BORN NEAR BERWICK 1803.

HE CAME TO INDIA IN 1827 AS A MISSIONARY OF THE CROSS,

AND PREACHED TO THE PEOPLE SALVATION

THROUGH THE ONE ATONEMENT OF JESUS,

THE ONLY SON OF GOD,

UNTIL HE FELL ASLEEP ON 27TH JULY 1855.

"DECLARE JEHOVAH'S GLORY AMONG THE HEATHEN."

PSALM XCVI. 3.

We have thus followed Robert Nesbit to the close of his earthly career. And now we do not mean—as we think we do not need—to pause in order that we may "point the moral" of his life. If his story has been truly told, it has all along been carrying with it its own sufficient comment. His example, which was one continued lesson to those who beheld it in life,—so calm, so high, so pure,—cannot but retain some measure of its attractiveness and force, even as faintly imaged in these pages.

He sleeps,—not in that Scotland which he loved so well, but in that far Eastern land whose spiritual maladies it was his life-long sorrow to behold—his life-long work to heal. He, too, "toiled, and fainted, and fell; and where he fell, there he lies."* He lies, not in such a rural solitude as he has himself sketched as the scene of "the Missionary's Grave;"† but in a quiet spot near the sea-shore—quiet, though close to the crowded city—he sleeps beside some whom he deeply loved. True,—it is not only a foreign but a heathen land,—it overflows with "all monstrous, all prodigious things"—it seems as if it were abandoned to the dominion of fallen spirits,—yet he rests well and safely there; for He whom he served is watching with a sleepless eye of love over his sleeping dust. Yea, and when we think how many of the servants of God, like him, have toiled and fallen in that land, then the eye of faith sees India all sprinkled with atoning blood—its foul idolatries victoriously purged off,—sees it even now a "Land of Promise," and about to become, ere long, a "Holy Land." For long has it been watered with the tears of God's saints,—nor can these precious drops have been shed in vain: "Are they not in Thy book?" It has now drunk of the blood of martyrs; the blood-drops cry unto Him from the ground,—and theirs is resistless plead-

* See p. 279. † See p. 166.

ing. Therefore, it becomes us to hope much for India. God has been fearfully dishonoured there; and He will yet be signally glorified. As of old He executed vengeance on the gods of Egypt and Assyria, so will He execute vengeance on the gods of India. Yea, the idols He will utterly abolish; He will take unto himself His great power and reign.

Rest, then, from thy labours, servant of Christ! who hast fought the good fight, and finished thy course, and kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for thee a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give thee at that day. How much India owes to thee, to thy life-sacrifice, to thy hallowed and lasting memory, (for thou, being dead, yet speakest), we shall fully know only at that day when thy dust shalt awake, and thou shalt take thy place among those who, having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Our proper work is done: and yet we dare not dismiss these pages without adding a few words.

We have seen with what earnestness Mr Nesbit, from the commencement to the close of his career, pleaded with his brethren at home, that they should send forth men to declare Jehovah's glory among the Heathen. We have seen how deeply he mourned over the coldness of the response to his fervent appeal—how hope deferred made his heart sick. Not that he would have spoken as if only the church at home were to blame. No; the conviction often came like a lightning flash across his spirit, that his highest conceptions of the work of preaching Christ to the Heathen did grievous dishonour to its glory, and that his most intense pleading seemed but a mockery of its overpowering claims, its majestic right. He spoke of "our slender, and almost faithless, prayerless work,"—taking shame to himself as well as condemning others. And yet what a

relief to his labouring soul when he could transfuse his own conceptions of the "preciousness, honour, and blessedness" of sharing in what he calls "emphatically the Lord's work," into the mind of his fellow-believers at home, and could kindle their spirits into burning sympathy with his own!

He believed that when full information regarding the state of the heathen field was supplied, the heart of Christians would respond to the call for help. We would now then simply add one or two facts, which, in their nakedness, may serve better to arouse the Church than any formal pleading of ours.

In 1828, soon after Mr Nesbit began his labours, there were six Scottish Missionaries in Western India; and in 1855, before he fell at his post, there were but five in India and one at home—in all still but six. Again, taking all the Protestant Missions together, there were on 1st January 1848, but thirty-two ordained European and American Missionaries for Western India; and on the 1st of January 1858, exactly ten years afterwards, there was precisely the same number.* The population among whom these labour in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Sindh, is not under twenty millions—so that there is not nearly the proportion of one missionary to half a million in Western India.

But we would not speak only of Western India,—we would speak of India as a whole. The work is barely begun. Provinces containing many millions of inhabitants have yet not a single missionary. Every thing that might have been urged before as to the *comparative* neglect which India has experienced at the hand of the Christian church,

* Namely, ten American Missionaries; nine of the Church of England; six of the Free Church of Scotland; four of the Irish Presbyterian Church two of the London Missionary Society, and one of the Baptist Missionary Society. The ordained Native Missionaries are nine in number.

or its special claims from its magnitude, accessibility, influence—topics which can all be most justly insisted on,—every pleading of this kind has received, during the last year, a most solemn confirmation—a most terrible enforcement. Well has 1857 been called "a year of unparalleled instruction." Especially it has instructed us as to the nature of Heathenism—and the conditions on which we hold our empire in Heathendom.

Suspicions were in many quarters entertained,—nay, the belief was often loudly expressed,—that the description given by missionaries of the sins and sorrows of the heathen was overcharged; and that, whatever ancient paganism might have been, yet modern paganism was a far different thing from the system delineated so fearfully by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans. These fond imaginations are now dispelled; the whole civilised world confesses that modern heathenism is a thing abhorred of Earth and Heaven, that ought to be chased back to the pit of darkness whence it came.

And has not that other truth been proclaimed as with a trumpet-peal—that India is a trust as awful as magnificent? Britain may be willing to trifle with that charge; but if the dealings of Divine Providence have, for human beings, any lesson at all, then it is certain that God, at least, is in earnest, and by redoubled and redoubled strokes, He will compel our faithless hearts to be the same.

What should Britain do for the evangelization of India? We read the commission, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Is the commission unreasonable? Did the Redeemer under-estimate the difficulty of the work, or over-estimate the support of His own presence, the resources of His grace, and the power, excelling human, which even worms of the dust acquire, when they

cling to the arm of His omnipotence? If not,—if the commission, on the other hand, be reasonable, and the duty imperative,—then woe is unto us if we seek not to obey the command. But of that field which is the world, assuredly the part specially allotted to the Christian care of Britain is that great Eastern land which has been so wondrously entrusted to her, and still so wondrously kept for her.

When tidings came from India of mutiny, and hideous massacre, and outrage worse than death, the nation quailed not. The pulse of the nation's heart beat firm and high with the strong resolve that India should be retained, or, if lost, re-won,—cost what it might in money, cost what it might in precious human life. Army after army was soon speeding to the scene of conflict; the blood of Britain's sons was poured out like water; men suddenly started up in many quarters, who approved themselves of the true old hero breed; —fiery valour—forethought and strategy—calm endurance, and unequalled fortitude, have been exhibited by Britain's sons; aye, and some of these qualities in their highest form by Britain's daughters, as if in the weakest heart there slumbered unknown power, ready to start up at a moment's call to meet whatever exigency. The spectacle is grandly impressive; none in history nobler. We have added, during the past year, to the roll of our country's worthies, names not a few, on which will wait "the tears and praises of all time." But if all this is done to conquer, or reconquer, India for Britain, what shall be attempted to conquer it for Christ? What adequate preparation is being made for the glorious enterprise? Has even this question yet been calmly and solemnly pondered by the Church,—What proportion ought to exist between the labourers the Church retains for herself at home, and those whom she sends abroad to evangelize the nations?

And is the present proportion one with which an awakened Church can remain satisfied for an hour?

We speak of the difficulty of conquering Heathenism; but may not the difficulty be chiefly of our making? With God nothing is difficult; yet He has been pleased to associate us with Himself, and require our presence, and to wait for our "help." We read of some of old, that Christ did not many mighty works among them, because of their unbelief; and now, although we cannot still the beatings of His loving heart, yet we can (awful power!) retard the movements of His wonder-working arm.

Will Britain, then, arise in the strength of God to do His work? She will not labour alone. Germany, and far America, already take part, and henceforth will take more part than ever, in the great enterprise;—how beautiful the alliance of the kindred nations, meeting in Asia in a far other and far higher than Crusader spirit, to wage a war of extermination not against Pagans, but against Paganism! Yet if these sister nations help because they see that India is open to the Gospel, though they have no special tie to that land,—surely on Britain there rests a double, an overwhelming responsibility!

Some of the Christians of Britain are not unaware of the magnitude of the occasion. The Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyans, the Baptists, have all resolved on a great enlargement of effort. What then will Scotland do? One great fact ought in fairness to be known—aye, proclaimed on the house-tops. There is in Scotland no lack of men who are willing to go forth. The schools of the prophets are not destitute of the spirit of the prophets; and young men, qualified by the grace of God, and by the possession of all that careful human training can

impart, are saying, "Here am I; send me." But the means to send them are wanting.

What a Christian Church may do in missionary effort, may be seen in the case of the Moravian Brethren; at least, they have done immeasurably more than any other body of Christians. O for that spirit of evangelistic zeal that has long burned in that small but illustrious Church! What Church shall claim the honour of being next, and near them,—displaying that "courage which no danger can intimidate, and that quiet constancy which no hardships can exhaust?"* What Church shall deserve the words of Divine approval, "She hath done what she *could*?"

Let us arise and gird ourselves to our high work as a Church and as a nation. The work may be long, and toilsome; blessed toil! how is the spirit braced by the exercise!

> Thou know'st the arduous strife, the eternal laws
> To which the triumph of all good is given—
> High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
> Even to the death.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

* Wilberforce thus speaks of the Moravians.

SKETCHES OF NATIVE SENTIMENT.

A FEW extracts from the Journals of Mr Nesbit's Missionary Itineracies have been already given. These have chiefly referred to his own feelings, or the state of the Missions he visited. The following extracts—which might be greatly multiplied did space permit—afford illustrations of Native thought and character.

I.—TOUR IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF POONA IN 1834.

Moguls and English in reference to Hinduism—Desire for Books—Discussion with a Puranik—Necessity of a Sinless Teacher—Widow reading Sanskrit—Self-evidencing power of Christianity—Brahmanical Prejudice—Family Quarrels—Whence are the English?—Cow-murder—Supposed cause of English Power—Government believed to patronise Hinduism—"Possession"—Discussion with Brahmans—Religion not Morality—Worship of the Elements—Qualities of a Brahman—How gods are made—Schoolmaster's pay—A modern Incarnation—Eating Fish—Inhumanity of Hindus.

Pandeshwar.—In walking out in the morning, I met in with one or two Brahmans, who, after a little conversation, asked me if I was not the gentleman who had passed that way a few days before. They referred to Mr Steven-

son, who had just returned to Poona by the same route that I am now following in an opposite direction. They had not themselves seen the gentleman, they said; but, on going to a village five miles distant, they had heard a great deal about him. His all in all, they added, seemed to be one called Jesus Christ, and Him he would have established on the ruins of everything else. The Moguls attempted to destroy their religion by the sword, the sledge-hammer, and the like: the English seemed to be attempting the same thing,—only their weapon was different, the "book" was everything with them.

The village accountant, a Brahman, being an ill-natured, contentious man, I had rather a noisy and tumultuous meeting with the people. One of his Brahmanical associates said at the outset—"All that you tell us is about one Jesus Christ, and the name of such a person is not once mentioned in all our sacred books." Hence I feared that none of my books would be accepted. In this, however, I was agreeably disappointed. Some of the tracts were most earnestly coveted, and none were rejected. In the midst of much contention, too, I found opportunity to state the Gospel with my own lips at considerable length. The people all declared, however, that they would never, never forsake the religion of their forefathers; and, when I told them that the English said the same when the disciples of Christ came into their country, and yet afterwards destroyed their ancient gods, received the doctrine of Christ, and were blessed in the reception of it, and that they, through the gracious power of God, would be led to do the same, and would experience the same blessing, they reiterated their former asseveration with tenfold vehemence, "Never, never!"

Morgaum.—After speaking to several visitors in the temple

in which I had taken up my quarters, I repaired to the market-place, and sat down in front of a shop. A reciter of the Puranas having intimated a wish to hold a discussion with me, I said I should be happy to see and converse with him. He wished, however, the crowd by which I was surrounded to be dispersed, or to have me retire to the verandah of his own house. To this I, of course, objected, saying that a crowd was the very thing I wanted, and that all the discussions I held were intended for the good of the people in general. On this he presented himself, and, after a little ceremony, took his seat. I began by asking him how guilt was to be removed. He replied that every one, by observing his own religion, would secure deliverance from sin. I instanced a class of men whose religion allowed them to steal, and a class of women whose religion allowed them to commit fornication and adultery. The Puranik, at first, maintained that the men and women referred to were right in following their respective religions, as, however bad they might appear to us, they were good for them. On putting the case of himself being robbed by some of the professed thieves, he seemed willing to admit that their religion might be well exchanged for a better. Still, however, he maintained that truth and honesty were not always binding, and that there were several cases in which it was virtue to infringe them. After a good deal of altercation on this and similar points, I charged him with spiritual adultery in forsaking the God that made him, and worshipping gods which he himself had made; and substantiated what I said by a metrical verse out of one of his own sacred books. On this he took up the common mode of defence on such occasions, saying that all his gods, however different in name and appearance, were one and the same; and that to worship

one, or many, or all of them, was to worship the one only true God. This led me to point out the opposite qualities and characters of their several gods, and thus to shew the impossibility of their being one and the same. The man seemed to feel that he was convicted of polytheism, as he immediately dropped the discussion, and asked me to unfold the nature of the God I worshipped, and the means of salvation which He had prescribed. I accordingly gave an account of the Trinity, and of the mission and work of the Son of God.

It is a happy circumstance that the Hindus generally admit that they need a spiritual guide, and that, to deliver them from sin, he must himself be sinless. By these admissions they exclude, before they are well aware, all their own priests, and sages, and gods from the relation of a spiritual Saviour; and they are thus brought directly to Jesus Christ, the "holy, harmless, undefiled" one.

In this village I met with the widow of a goldsmith who could read Sanskrit and could repeat a great part of the Gítá. I gave her three tracts, which, if read and understood, will completely undeceive her in reference to the meritoriousness of her literary attainments.

Medad.—I explained and illustrated the truths of the Gospel, and had occasion, at the same time, to expose the utter falsehood of Hinduism. The people were amazed at the sudden demolition of their most undoubted and fondly-cherished opinions. Gods and incarnations disappeared one after another; and the very principles which they themselves had granted at the outset, left them nothing but the holy God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners. What they said of the arguments by which Christianity is established, was most true,—that they were so simple and reasonable as to recommend themselves at once to their

convictions, while the stories of their own books were as crooked and intricate as the ingenuity of the writer could make them.

Barámatí.—Mr Stevenson visited this place two weeks ago. The people had read the books he had left, and had seen that, whatever was the subject more immediately referred to, they all pointed to Jesus Christ as the only Saviour. Many of the Brahmans, on this account, avoided me; and some of those who came to converse with me told me that they saw very plainly what my object was, and therefore would have none of my books. This gave me occasion to shew that they stood in need of the Saviour whom the books revealed, there being no name revealed in their own books by which they could possibly be saved. The demand for tracts interspersed with Sanskrit verses, however, was still much greater than the supply.

A bigoted Brahman, who could seldom resist the temptation to come and hear what I was saying, remarked that I always spoke very well at the outset of my discourse, but that I turned every subject I treated of to what was altogether intolerable—the establishment of the worship of a God whom neither they nor their fathers had so much as heard of.

Lasurna.—In conversing with one of the Brahmans, I found that no fewer than five or six hundred families, including his own, claimed a share of the perquisites connected with the office of village-accountant. "In that case," said I, "are you not apt to quarrel?" "To be sure," he replied, "we are always quarrelling. Where do brothers ever exist without quarrelling? Brotherhood is but another name for contention and hatred. Strangers may form a real friendship; brothers never can." The poor man did not see that the same clashing of interests which precludes